Title: Sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of foreign language classroom discourse = Socjolingwistyczne i psycholingwistyczne aspekty interakcji w kontekście klasy

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Sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of foreign language classroom discourse

Socjolingwistyczne i psycholingwistyczne aspekty interakcji w kontekście klasy

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'Our best preparation for an evolving society is helping children face the future with confidence in their own abilities and with a faith that they are worthwhile and important members of whatever culture they might find themselves in.'

(Pine and Boy, 1977:47)

Introduction

The inspiration to write this work was for me the reflection that came to my mind on one rainy day when I was teaching my eighth lesson of English on that day. Looking at my students doing some lexical exercise with their hands resting on their elbows and the feeling of tiredness which could be read from their eyes and faces, I realised that they spend almost half of their teenage life at school and therefore school is, or at least, should be for them a second home. Home is a place where you can be your real self, express your thoughts and ideas freely without the fear of being condemned or rejected. It is also a place where you have a chance to learn new things and develop your potential as it gives you the feeling of security. On that day I did not feel comfortable enough to ask my students if they felt good in the classroom. However, I began to think about what influences our interactions most significantly.

I realised that a FL teacher could only do his/her job well, and by the teacher's job I do not only understand sharing language knowledge, but also educating in the broad sense of the word, if s/he knew the students and was aware of how s/he was perceived by them. These two factors are believed to have a direct influence not only on the quality of the teacher-learner interaction but also on the learners' language progress and their individual development. They therefore require teacher's regular reflection taking into account that teaching a foreign language means teaching communication with other people.

This was the moment when I thought of carrying out a research project aimed at examining English teachers' self-awareness as professionals and teachers. Asking teachers to fill in questionnaires and to participate in interviews aimed at triggering the process of becoming a reflective-practitioner. In order to extend the field of my exploration I decided to write my own teaching diary. This way the fleeting impressions concerning my interaction with students, myself as a teacher and teaching in general did not sink into oblivion but had a chance to be re-thought and to hopefully result in greater awareness of who I was as a teacher which contributed to improving the effectiveness of my teaching and therefore to greater satisfaction of the students with both my classroom performance and attitude to them. The process of diary writing positively influenced not only my professional but also personal growth.

Through the years, various theories concerning FL teacher's perception of students and *vice versa* have been created. Whatever has been said so far, however, and whatever teacher's attitude to his/her students is, it needs to be remembered that our students are in a sense customers whose satisfaction we should seek. Armed with our experience and knowledge, we know what it is that our students want and aim at achieving. Students' satisfaction does not mean giving them what they want but rather guiding them to discover their true selves. To do this successfully, we need to get to know our students first and then to use methods that they accept and find beneficial to their self-development, not only as language learners, but also as young people entering the 'adult' world.

The results of the research I carried out reveal that the teachers participating in the project were unaware that there were discrepancies in their own and their students' perception of different aspects of both classroom discourse and the teaching-learning process. The reason for their lack of awareness here was the fact that they did not devote sufficient time to the reflection upon the way they taught and to their professional development. This, in the future, may result in their losing motivation to teach and lead to underestimating of their role of teachers in shaping individual student's life. This work is therefore dedicated to all teachers but mainly to my colleagues - teachers of English, to remind them that the most important task in their professional life is to help students discover their own potential as FL learners and as people. It seems that this task may only be carried out successfully if the teachers take more responsibility for raising both their professional self-awareness and the awareness of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors involved in the process of classroom interaction.

Chapter I Theoretical background

1. Characteristic features of classroom communication

Teaching and learning a foreign language in an artificial context confined to a school classroom is a very difficult and demanding task for both the teacher and the students. Although communication in a language lesson seems to be natural, in fact, it is not because,as Komorowska (2001) shows, classroom communication is characterised by a number of features that are hardly ever met in everyday human contacts. According to Komorowska (2001: 57-59) the first of the features distinguishing classroom from natural communication is 'the inequality of communicative rights': it is the teacher who organises and manages the lesson. S/he makes most or all of the decisions and takes up many different roles: from the knowledge-giver and expert to the assessor of students' progress. In everyday life, participants of the conversation are generally partners who have an equal right to express their opinions. In the classroom it is the teacher who is in charge of communication: s/he decides about the choice of a speaker, the topic of the verbal exchange, the time and length of the students' talk. The teacher may interrupt a student at any moment and ask the latter to re-formulate or paraphrase what was said. Students are expected to follow their teacher's instructions or otherwise they may expect his/her disapproval or even punishment. Komorowska (*ibid.*) explains that in natural communication such situations take place only in the case of significant differences in the participants' social status and distance.

Other differences concern conversation initiation and participant talking time. In most classroom situations, it is the teacher who initiates any form of verbal exchange with students: s/he is the one who asks questions and waits for students' answers and s/he is the one who speaks for most (even up to two-thirds) of the lesson time. In everyday communication each participant has the same right to start a conversation and speak for the similar amount of time as his/her communication partner if only both partners have the same status and language competence level. In the classroom it is the teacher, having higher status than the students, who makes most decisions concerning communication during the FL lesson.

The differences mentioned above are not, however, the only ones which make classroom communication unnatural. There are also several discrepancies connected with the

way the language is used in most classroom situations. The first concerns 'the predictability of student responses'. In natural communication predictability of a participant's answer is greatly limited as there are many possible answers to one question. In the classroom, students know what they are expected to say. They only have to use the foreign language to express the idea.

Another difference is 'the lack of redundancy', the presence of which is so characteristic of everyday communication. During a foreign language lesson both - the teacher and students usually use the smallest number of words necessary to be understood. There is often no place and time for paraphrasing, changing one's mind or for using synonyms or antonyms to facilitate understanding. This is mostly connected with both the limited time of the lesson and the number of words and phrases that students are able to understand and use. In the case of the classroom talk every word constitutes a part of the meaning that one tries to convey. The listener must understand every element of the utterance to understand the message conveyed in the foreign language code.

One more difference which makes classroom communication unnatural is the fact that in most classroom situations 'non-verbal communication is greatly limited'. In everyday contact people get most of the information concerning speaker's intentions and also feelings, education and personality from the non-verbal signals s/he sends by means of facial expressions, posture, gaze, gesture and tone of voice. In the classroom context body language is greatly reduced – in most cases students sit and answer teacher's questions without showing any strong emotions like anger or happiness which would naturally evoke more vivid non-verbal reactions.

Another feature that makes classroom different from natural communication is 'the lack of an information gap'. The condition of successful communication in real life is the exchange of information between participants, which is only possible if there is a difference in the level of information concerning either facts or emotions, or both, which exists between the speakers. In the classroom a teacher asks questions that students know answers to, which leads to the sense of stagnation, boredom and the feeling that classroom communication has no communicative sense.

The difference that also needs to be mentioned is 'the lack of language skills integration'. In real life we often use two or even three language skills simultaneously in one communication act, for example, when reading a text we ask someone a question concerning its contents and write down the answer on the margin of a page. In the foreign language classroom skills are often developed separately to make it easier for students to understand the

language included in the task and to complete it successfully, i.e. some of the lesson time is devoted to reading comprehension and some to vocabulary and grammar practice.

Last but not the least is 'the lack of style change' depending on the situation and the interlocutor. Natural language is flexible – it depends on where we are, who we talk to, our attitude to the communication partner and the topic of conversation. In the classroom the language that is used is neutral, no matter what the subject of the lesson is. It lacks flexibility in the choice of words and phrases depending on the topic and communication act participants. There is no style differentiation, as in most cases the communication partners do not change: it is always a teacher and a student, or a student and his/her peers.

This multiplicity of features distinguishing FL classroom communication from natural communication adversely affects the process of language learning as the features mentioned make it artificial and deprived of genuine communicative sense. The purpose of the teaching-learning process is to ensure successful exchange of information through both verbal and non-verbal channels. Confining foreign language communication to the classroom context makes it artificial and therefore so hard for the teacher to teach and for the learner to learn. That is why effective teaching should focus on reducing these typical FL classroom features by re-establishing balance in the communicative rights that the participants of the classroom verbal interaction – namely, the teacher and the learners have. The balance may only be kept if the teacher manages to create in his/her contacts with learners the atmosphere of trust, respect and openness to one another in both on-task and off-task communication during a language lesson.

Teaching a foreign language is teaching students to function in different natural communication situations in which communication is always a two-way process. It is therefore the teacher's responsibility to create appropriate conditions for the foreign language to be used freely through both providing time and space for student talk and also supporting them in their endeavour to be understood. Creating an atmosphere of friendliness helps students to overcome language stress – it needs to be remembered that in the case of the foreign language learning it is the particular language that is the means of communication. Lesson participation requires a lot of effort on the part of the learners to understand the teacher's questions and to respond to them. Lack of teachers' approval of students' effort results in communication block followed by students' withdrawal and possibly, a drop of interest in learning the language.

Positive learning environment in the language classroom provides the teacher with good grounds for developing students' autonomy, which is necessary to be able to speak of both

effective classroom discourse and successful language learning, as in spite of being time and effort consuming, the process also depends on the individual features of students. What the teacher in the classroom may do is to share his/her knowledge, to show students techniques and strategies to learn a language, to supervise their work and to motivate them. However, it is the student who must take the initiative and feel the need to take some actions aimed at learning a foreign language to reach a required level of competence.

Although the atmosphere in the language classroom depends on many different factors, e.g. the person of the teacher, the learners, the topic of the lesson and the time of the day, it is the teacher – the manager of the teaching/learning process who is mainly responsible for it.
The atmosphere of the lesson and therefore the process of teaching and learning a foreign language depend mostly on the teacher's ability to organise and manage a lesson (pedagogical skills), to share knowledge with students (didactic skills), to use a foreign language correctly and fluently (language skills) and, above all, to communicate with students (interactive skills). Communication in the language classroom means mainly students responding to teacher's instructions and the teacher answering students' questions. This two-way flow of information between the teacher and learners is only possible if the teacher knows who the students are, is aware of their cognitive and emotional needs and tries to meet them.

2. The affective needs of learners

2.1 The affective domain

The affective domain of human behaviour refers to emotions, the development of which involves a variety of personality factors as well as feelings people have both about themselves and about others with whom they interact (Brown, 1987:100). As the sphere of feelings underlies any cognitive activity – including learning, it is extremely important for the teacher to understand how learners feel and how different personality factors affect the process of learning.

In his taxonomy, Bloom (1970) outlines five levels of affectivity influencing foreign language learning. They are:

Level 1: **Receiving**– a person must be aware of the environment s/he exists in (people, language) and willing to receive stimuli from it

Level 2: **Responding** – a person responds voluntarily to others and to the context of communication

Level 3: **Valuing** – a person places a certain value on the communicative act and the valuing depends on one's set of beliefs and attitudes

Level 4: **Organisation of values** – a person organises values into a system of beliefs establishing a hierarchy within the system

Level 5: **Understanding oneself in terms of the value system** – a person acts according to the values which constitute a total philosophy of his/her life and which s/he believes in.

If a foreign language teacher wants to relate the five levels of affectivity to the classroom context, s/he needs to follow the enlisted guidelines presented by Bloom (1970) in order to facilitate mutual teacher-learner interaction:

- a student must be made aware of where s/he is (a FL classroom) and what his/her aim in the place is (to learn the foreign language),
- the learner must be given appropriate conditions (i.e. interesting lesson topic, an attentive teacher-listener) to feel encouraged to express his/her own ideas,
- the teacher must know that whatever students say in the classroom depends on the set of beliefs and attitudes which they have and which should always be respected no matter what life philosophy the teacher represents.

The affective domain also comprises the sphere of emotions which is strictly connected with the language use as the emotions and the language (which is frequently used to express the emotions verbally) constitute two different aspects of human communication which complement each other in most forms of a person's behaviour. What people feel and what means, whether verbal or non-verbal, they want to use to express their feelings depend on a number of different personality factors.

2.2 Personality factors influencing communication in the foreign language classroom

When discussing the influence of the affective domain on teacher-learner interaction we must take into consideration personality factors which shape both teacher's and learners' behaviour in the classroom. These factors are:

- self-esteem
- inhibition
- risk-taking
- anxiety

- empathy
- extroversion/introversion
- motivation.

Self-esteem

It is commonly claimed that no action can be performed by people if they do not believe in their own capabilities to complete the activity. Self-esteem and self-confidence increase or sometimes decrease in parallel with the development of personality.

Coppersmith (1967:4-5) calls self-esteem 'the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself' and adds that the evaluation 'indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy'.

Brown (1987:102) goes further in his definition of self-esteem and states that 'people drive their self-esteem from the accumulation of experiences with themselves and with others and from assessment of the external world around them' and he distinguishes the following kinds of self-esteem:

- 'global': relatively stable especially in the case of mature adults,
- 'situational' or 'specific': which refers to one's appraisals of 'self' in different life situations, e.g. at work, at home, at school,
- 'task': which refers to an individual's evaluation of a particular task done in a certain situation.

Both teacher and learner self-esteem are very important in the process of teaching/learning a foreign language. If a teacher does not believe that s/he can teach successfully and is uncertain of the skills and language knowledge possessed, s/he cannot be a good teacher. What is more, if s/he does not believe in him/herself, s/he will never believe in his/her students and without this the creation of a supportive teacher-learner relationship which has a positive influence on both the language performance and the emotional well-being of students is impossible.

Inhibition

The concept of self-esteem is inextricably connected with the one of inhibition. Brown (1987:10) claims that 'All human beings, in their understanding of themselves, build sets of defences to protect the ego'. By the 'ego' he understands the system of affective traits which individuals identify themselves with (Brown, 1987:103). As people grow up and as their self-awareness increases because of different life experiences those with low self-esteem tend to build more walls of inhibition to protect their ego than others with higher self-esteem, as they constantly encounter new situations in which their ego is (hypothetically) threatened.

Guiora (1980) suggests that the inhibitions and defences people build between themselves and others may even prevent them from communicating in a foreign language if for example, one perceives making language mistakes, which is an inevitable stage of FL learning, to be a threat to his/her ego. Thus, again the importance of teacher's support in the teacher-learner interaction taking place in the foreign language learning classroom needs to be stressed, as learner inhibitions do not facilitate learning and can be removed only if a teacher is aware that they exist, is tolerant towards students whose behaviour may result from their inhibition blocks, wants to help those students overcome their fears and is willing to build a friendly atmosphere of openness in the classroom which undoubtedly helps his/her students to be real 'selves'.

Risk taking

If a learner wants to be successful in learning a language s/he must be willing to make guesses about the language and be ready to take the risk of being wrong. There is a danger, however, that a person may be too bold in producing language constructions which may be impossible to understand. It must be therefore stressed that success in learning a language 'lies in the optimum point where *calculated* guesses are ventured' (Brown, 1987:105).

Teachers' experience shows that only infrequently there are students who happen to be overly high risk-takers and who therefore need to be 'tamed' by them (Brown, 1987). Most students are rather unwilling to make guesses about the language as they may be afraid of bad marks, a reproach from the teacher or some negative comments and smirks from the peers (Beebe, 1983:40). It is therefore the teacher's task to create such an atmosphere in the language lesson in which students would feel valued as persons even if they made mistakes.

Anxiety

Apart from self-esteem, inhibition and risk taking it is anxiety that plays an important role in the foreign language learning. It is associated with the feelings of 'uneasiness, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry' that people experience when they have to face some complex task and wonder if they may possibly succeed (Brown, 1987:106). FL learning is a perfect example of such a complex as well as time- and effort-consuming task. Students' involvement in learning may therefore result in the feeling of foreign language anxiety (FLA) – a kind of tension which is connected with the level of their belief in learning success and ability to express themselves in the FL.

Anxiety may be classified as 'debilitative' or 'facilitative' (Alpert & Haber, 1960). In the context of language learning the first type of anxiety is perceived as a negative feeling which hinders understanding and successful language production. Facilitative anxiety, on the other hand, relates to a positive tension that keeps people alert and eager to do the task. On the basis of her own self-analysis, Bailey (1983, cited in Brown,1987) came to the conclusion that the positive effects that competition has on learning result from facilitative anxiety that students experience when doing different language tasks based on competition among students.

The implication for teaching that can be drawn here is that both too much and too little anxiety may make language learning difficult and that teachers should try (if possible) to balance the level of anxiety that their students feel in their lessons to make it optimal for learning a language.

Empathy

Language, whether verbal or non-verbal, is the basic means of communication between the members of a society. Successful communication requires a certain dose of empathy – a variable of affective domain which is difficult to define and which may be described as 'reaching beyond the self and understanding and feeling what another person is understanding or feeling' (Brown, 1987:107). Language is one of the basic means of expressing empathy. In order to communicate effectively, one must understand what the other person thinks and feels. Identification with the person is not possible, however, if one is not aware of his/her own feelings. Misunderstanding of the other person's affective and cognitive states leads to creating false presuppositions and assumptions which are responsible for the communication break-downs.

In the process of the foreign language learning, empathy plays a very important role – it facilitates communication provided that speakers and hearers are able to correctly interpret each others' cognitive and affective states.

Extroversion/Introversion

What the concept of extroversion, as opposed to introversion, really means is 'the extent to which a person has a deep-seated need to receive ego-enhancement, self-esteem, and a sense of wholeness from other people' (Brown, 1987:109). Introversion, on the other hand means 'receiving that affirmation within oneself' (Brown, 1987:109). A stereotypical conviction is that an introvert student is usually shy and reserved while his/her extrovert peer is an active and talkative person who does well in speaking activities. However, this may not always be true. Extroverts may also be shy and still need other people's support in order to 'feel' good when, for example, they encounter a new or a difficult situation in their lives and their extrovertic manner may only be a defensive mechanism built to protect their 'ego' (Brown, 1987).

Different studies concerning extro- and introversion have not made it clear whether the two concepts facilitate or hinder the process of foreign language learning. On the basis of classroom observation it may be concluded that extroversion may help develop general oral communicative competence as it requires face to face interaction that extroverts need in order to enhance their self-esteem being frequently self-centred and focused on meeting their own needs. However, being an extrovert does not have to mean being a more proficient learner than an introvert who has simply different areas of strengths than his/her extrovertic peer. Introverts often turn out to be better students in reading, listening and writing as they are usually more concentrated on the task to be done and less on the discourse participants as extroverts tend to do.

In the light of the above, the implication for teaching is that teachers need to be very careful in selecting methods of work with students because of their individual differences. Incorporation in the lesson of those methods which call for extroversion, for example drama or role play, may not always bring the intended positive results if we take into consideration that students often come from different cultures and what one culture perceives as respect, others may call introversion (e.g. Japan and the USA) and that the level of extro- and introversion varies from student to student.

Being aware of students' extro- and introvertic tendencies in behaviour the teacher needs to show and encourage empathy for the different feelings that students have. Finally, a

teacher should do his/her best to find effective ways of motivating both types of students to learn a foreign language in a friendly environment created by him/her in the classroom.

Motivation

Countless studies and people's life experience show that motivation is a key to learning and any other action undertaken. No matter whether 'instrumental' - aimed at achieving goals utilising the foreign language or 'integrative' – aimed at integration with a foreign culture, motivation defined as 'a state of cognitive arousal which provokes a decision to act resulting in sustained intellectual and/or physical effort enabling the person to achieve some previously set goal' (Williams and Burden, 1997:120) is necessary to achieve success in learning a foreign language.

There are many sources of motivation but the concept of motivation which is based on six basic desires and needs of human beings that Brown (1987) proposes appears to represent most of these. The concept includes the following:

(1) the need for *exploration,* for seeing "the other side of the mountain," for probing the 'unknown';
(2) the need for *manipulation,* for operating (…)and causing change;
(3) the need for *activity*, for movement and exercise, both physical and mental;
(4) the need for *stimulation*, the need to be stimulated by the environment, by other people, or by ideas, thoughts, and feelings;
(5) the need for *knowledge*; the need to process and internalise the results of exploration, manipulation, activity, and stimulation, to resolve contradictions, to quest for solutions to problems and for self-consistent systems of knowledge;
(6) the need for *ego enhancement*, for the self to be known and to be accepted and approved of by others. (Brown, 1987:114)

In the process of learning a foreign language a few and sometimes all of the six needs are fulfilled. Those which are met particularly often in the process are the needs for exploration, stimulation and knowledge. Thus, a foreign language learner who finds fulfilment of his/her needs in learning the language will be positively motivated to learn it. It is therefore the teacher's task to prepare language lessons in such a way that they will meet the needs of students. What is more, s/he should also make students aware which of their needs are fulfilled when learning the language.

As all of the affective factors mentioned here influence human communication in general and teacher-learner interaction in the foreign language lesson in particular, they need to be carefully considered by teachers in relation to themselves as individual beings and also in relation to the students they teach. Without proper understanding of the personal variables which influence teaching/learning process the teacher will never find true satisfaction in doing the job. Moreover, s/he has little chance of creating for students and with them, a supportive and warm atmosphere in which they may make progress in learning a foreign language and develop as individuals.

All the factors briefly described play an important role in shaping teachers' and students' behaviour. Teachers, as well-educated professionals, need to be aware of all the variables governing students' actions in the classroom. Taking their knowledge of the affective domain as the basis for building relationships with students they should also do their best to create an environment which optimally facilitates learning in the classroom.

3. The learning environment and its influence on classroom discourse

3.1 The learning environment

According to Sternberg (1984), exploration of any aspect of the teaching-learning process is only possible in the context in which it takes place because learning, like any other activity, does not happen in a vacuum, but always in its own well-defined and structured environment.

Two kinds of learning context may be distinguished: micro-context and macro-context. Generally, the macro-context may be defined as the educational system of the particular country. The aims of such a system in different parts of the world vary greatly and even within the boundaries of one country educational policy may not be consistent. The way schools function in Poland is likely to be very different from how they function in Great Britain or Germany. In our research on the quality of personal interactions between teachers and students we may focus on the more narrow context of classroom environment, the micro-context, just to learn that it differs greatly even in the case of one school. It is especially important if we take into consideration that many children spend about 15,000 hours in the classroom during the years of their school education. This shows that depending on the context, whether broad (global) or narrow (local), we may speak of many different learning environments, the shape of which depends on a multiplicity of different factors existing within the context in which those environments appear, e.g. educational policy of a country, the way of foreign language teaching approved by a certain institution, or even an individual

teacher. Generally, learning environments are difficult to compare as they are deeply rooted in the culture of both the society they were created for and the local communities.

In order to help learners to learn and develop as fully integrated individuals, a teacher has to be therefore aware what the learning environment really is and how to improve it so that students could benefit from it the most (Greenhalgh, 1994).

Williams and Burden (1997:188) note that one of the most important functions of a foreign language is to make it possible for individual students to be able to create an image of themselves in relation to the environment they live in by describing the environment. Thus, the value of creating appropriate environmental conditions for learning cannot be underestimated by teachers.

3.2 Classroom environment – a historical perspective

Research on classroom environment was inspired by Philip Jackson's book entitled *Life in Classrooms* (1990). Further explorations were then continued in the studies of two American psychiatrists - Rudolf Moss and Herbert Walberg who created many useful techniques for assessing classroom environment, providing teachers with useful data on learners' perception of the concept and its influence on learning outcomes.

However, it was already as early as in 1970's when Moss developed the *Classroom Environment Scale* (Moss and Trinkett, 1974) focusing on examining three teaching-learning domains: relationships, goal-orientation and system maintenance and change as well as learners' understanding of what was happening in the classroom during a lesson. One of his most important findings was that there is no 'optimum' classroom environment as 'different kinds of classroom organisation tend to give rise to different kinds of learning outcomes' (Williams and Burden, 1997:196). Each of the three classroom orientations influenced by the teacher's focus in the lesson have both their strengths and weaknesses (Table1).

Teacher's main focus in the FL lesson	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**
learner's satisfaction	Enhanced social and personal growth	Does not facilitate much traditional achievement
task achievement	High achievement	Does not facilitate learner interests, morale or creativity very much
full control of a class	No problems with disruptive student behaviour	Leads to dissatisfaction, alienation, does not facilitate personal, social or academic growth

Table1. Positive and negative aspects of different class orientation (based on Williams and Burden, 1997:197)

As can concluded none of the class orientations: task achievement, student satisfaction or classroom discipline should be the focus of the FL lesson separately, for the simple reason that implemented solely they do not meet the basic conditions of successful learning which requires co-operation of different factors in order to bring positive results. Classes focusing on task achievement ensure completion of the teaching material as well as high students' achievement but do little to stimulate students' creativity or develop their interests. Those classes which concentrate on learner satisfaction enable student self-realisation, but at the same time they do not give good teaching results as educational stress is shifted from traditional achievement to a person's social growth. In those classes where discipline is in focus a teacher has no problems with disruptive behaviour, but students often feel alienated and dissatisfied. The most effective learning environment should therefore be created by a combination of the three focuses mentioned above.

Moss's contemporary, Herbert 3rd edition), created the *Learning Environment Inventory* (LEI) focusing on domains other than those of Moss's such as institution, aptitude and environment which play an interactive part in learning. The LEI scale can be successfully used to predict learner achievement and attitude towards subjects such as maths or physics.

As both scales proved to be too time consuming for regular use by teachers, an Australian science educator, Barry Fraser (1989) developed a set of easy to apply scales called *My Class Inventory* which assess five aspects of class environment: satisfaction, friction, competitiveness, difficulty and cohesiveness. However, it is his project on the *Individualised Classroom Environment Questionnaire* (CEQ) that distinguished Frazer from other researchers in the field. The main focus of the CEQ scale were the domains of personalisation, participation, independence, investigation and differentiation. The aim of the scale application was to investigate the effects of classroom structure on learners attitudes towards learning a particular subject. His research based on data obtained by means of the CEQ scale indicated that both teachers and learners have their own image of the ideal classroom in which they would like to teach/be taught. This means that the degree of similarity between the ideal image and the actual classroom that students find themselves in, is the decisive factor which influences the students' level of satisfaction with the subject and in consequence, shapes their positive feelings towards it leading to success in learning it. The same regularity refers to teachers, too.

Thus, the importance of teachers' and learners' perceptions of the classroom reality and the way this reality is influenced by ideal images on both sides of the teaching-learning process must always be taken into account when considering factors influencing successful language learning. Differences in perception of the classroom reality which exist between teachers and learners result in the general feeling of dissatisfaction and also poor teaching/learning results.

3.3 Creating a positive learning environment

In order to examine more closely the contribution of the classroom environment to both teacher-learner communication in the foreign language classroom and the process of teaching and learning, it needs to be stressed that learning at school and outside it are two processes which theoretically have the same aim – to gather information about the world, but in practice they are achieved in different ways. Before starting school, a child uses his/her language for natural communication and 'learns the world' by observing different life situations, participating in them and asking questions to understand 'the new'. As s/he is in most cases praised for doing this, s/he learns synthetically. There is no division into subjects, as takes place at school.

The artificial subject division shifts the focus from the child-world explorer, who perceives all that is around him/her holistically, to the teacher-expert and knowledge giver. This may have many negative consequences. Firstly, division into subjects makes it more difficult for a child to perceive the world holistically and to find logical connections between the multiplicity of new pieces of information s/he receives. Secondly, if a teacher mainly plays the role of an expert, teaching 'ready-made' formulae and using complicated subject-related vocabulary, it is his/her version of the world that is important. There is no place for students' own explorations and their own answers. The learner's natural curiosity burns out and we can speak of 'the death of a learner'. Because the teacher is the manager of the teaching process, it is his/her main task to create such a classroom environment which enables learners to act as independent explorers that they used to be before starting their school education.

There are many different concepts describing learning environment. One of these was presented by the social and clinical psychologist, Uri Bronfenbrenner (1979) who perceived the learning process to be best described and understood if it was looked upon from the ecological point of view.

3.4 The concept of ecological environment

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), it is only possible to understand the process of the development of an individual learner if we consider his/her learning environment from the 'ecological' perspective, which means through the environmental systems surrounding him/her. In his approach to the learning environment Bronfenbrenner (1979) distinguishes:

- *micro-system* - the closest relation a learner has, i.e. with parents, siblings, peers,
- *mesosystem* – a broader range of interactions between the learner and those important to him,
- *ecosystem* – including those interactions that others have with one another and which have indirect effect on the learner,
- *macro-system* – involving all the interactions within the culture of the society the learner lives in.

Each person is perceived as an inseparable part of a social system and may be described in the context of each of Bronfenbrenner's subsystems. Sometimes these systems have clearly defined boundaries, e.g. the micro-system signifies the closest family and friends of an individual, but in most cases the boundaries are permeable so that the systems are constantly changing and interacting. The systems by means of which a person's individual development may be traced and understood are mutually inclusive.

What we can learn from Bronfenbrenner's approach is that a person's individual development is seen as a complex process involving many different types of relationships which one builds depending on who s/he interacts with.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective gave rise to a variation known as 'systems approach' (Molnar and Lindquist, 1989) characterised by the following assumptions:

1. each individual is an inseparable part of a social system
2. system boundaries are often permeable so that all the system is undergoing constant changes
3. the way an individual learns depends on how the system works as a whole and how systemic factors influence the learners
4. interaction within the systems is dynamic and multifaceted.

Both the ecological and the systems approach advocate that learning must be viewed holistically and that emphasis needs to be put equally on relationships and interactions as well as on the participants and the context of what is learned. Only by gathering information on each of the aforementioned factors can FL teachers create a congruent environment which facilitates and optimises learning (Williams and Burden, 1997:190).

As every person is different, each individual finds certain environmental conditions more conducive to learning than others. Dunn and Price (1986) identify four conditions which influence the process of learning:

- *environmental* (temperature, size of room, noise),
- *emotional* (motivation, enthusiasm, persistence),
- *sociologica*l (preference for learning alone/ in pairs/ in groups),
- *physiological* (need for food, drink, preferred time of day for learning).

Being aware of such individual differences makes it easier for the teacher to interact with learners more successfully. An open and sincere discussion with learners concerning their preferred time of the day to learn, their favourite forms of work and factors influencing their motivation to learn is likely to be an invaluable source of information for FL teachers who are aiming to improve both the learning environment and the attitudes of students.

Dunn and Griggs also note that there is high likelihood that individual preferences are strongly linked to cultural background (Dunn and Griggs, 1989). Thus, it must be stressed once again that to create an optimal learning environment for learners, the teacher needs to be aware of not only individual but also cultural differences between the learners.

3.5 Teacher behaviour as a contribution to learning environment

In the light of the previously mentioned studies, it seems natural that the person of a teacher, with his/her both imagined and true perceptions of classroom reality, undoubtedly influences students' learning outcomes. Studies of teachers' effectiveness indicate that it is only possible to obtain optimum teaching results if teachers are able to create and maintain a positive classroom environment.

Wubbels, Creton and Hoomayers (1992) distinguished two aspects of teacher behaviour as influencing classroom climate: *instructional-methodological* - concerning the selection of

methods, strategies and forms of assessment and *interpersonal* - concerning creation of a positive classroom atmosphere.

For the evaluation of teacher-learner relationships, the same researchers created the *Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction* (QTI) which assessed eight aspects of teacher's behaviour:

- Leadership,
- Helping/friendly,
- Admonishing behaviour,
- Student responsibility/ freedom,
- Uncertain,
- Understanding,
- Dissatisfied,
- Strict behaviour.

The QTI was a developed and validated version of a questionnaire based upon 'a model of interpersonal behaviour within a framework provided by systems communication theory (((Williams and Burden, 1997). Different studies carried out in the USA, Australia and the Netherlands demonstrate that learners' cognitive and affective outcomes are highly influenced by the FL teacher's behaviour in the classroom (Wubbels and Levy, 1991; Wubbels, 1993; Brophy and Good, 1986). For example, those teachers who were friendly and understanding towards learners, but at the same time showed more leadership in their mutual interactions, were found to foster greater learner achievement than those who demonstrated more uncertain and dissatisfied behaviour.

3.6 Individual perceptions of the learning environment

Although Williams and Burden (1997) agree with aforementioned researchers that learning is greatly influenced by the environment in which it takes place, they stress the indirect nature of this influence. They explain that it is not the classroom environment itself but rather 'the way in which participants in the teaching-learning process *make sense* of that process and of the environment in which it occurs which exerts the major influence on the learning outcomes' (Williams and Burden, 1997:200). They argue that it is difficult to make any generalisations as to which environment best suits FL learning purposes as each learner constructs his/her own sense of the learning environment. They advocate the importance of the teacher-learner

exchange of perceptions concerning the learning context as leading to raising teacher's awareness of the type of environment preferred by his/her learners and therefore beneficial to learning outcomes. Teachers must bear in mind that the best environment for language learning is, according to Williams and Burden (1997:202), the one that enhances trust, confidence and self-esteem necessary to use a new language successfully.

Every human activity takes place in some environment which may be objectively described by any external observer. It is, however, subjective assessment of the environment by an individual that helps to understand his/her behaviour. Konarzewski (1995:93) claims that 'It is impossible to understand anybody without the knowledge how s/he defines his/her present situation'. Definition of the situation one finds him/herself in entails expectations which may or not find their reflection in reality. If they do, the interpretation of the situation will become associated with the global features of the surrounding in which the situation took place. For example, if a student hears some negative comments from the peers and the teacher concerning his/her tattoo or a nose piercing, s/he may come to the conclusion that the school is old-fashioned and intolerant of innovation. These reinforced dominant interpretative schemes are the key to understanding a person's behaviour in a certain environment.

When considering the school environment, Konarzewski (1995) presents three types of dominant interpretative schemes which he calls dimensions of the objective school environment. They are:

1. **friendliness – hostility** – this dimension describes the supposed intentions and feelings that members of a group have towards one another, for example, a student may perceive his/her school environment as hostile if s/he suspects some students despise him/her, laugh at him/her, etc. However, the evaluation of the school environment may change over time, e.g. a new student may perceive school as a hostile place at the beginning of the school year and as a friendly one when s/he makes friends with other students from the school or a class.
2. **relevance – irrelevance** – this dimension describes different aspects of the environment from the point of view of a person's aims. A student may consider a foreign language lesson environment as having sense if the foreign language s/he learns is for the student a means of achieving certain aims, e.g. getting a better job in the future, communicating with peers from different countries, etc.
3. **control – lack of control** – students perceive the school environment as controllable if they believe they may change it to some extent. And, on the other hand, if students do not believe their efforts may lead to any change in the school environment, it is

thought to be impossible to control. Every aspect of school life, e.g. the rules that have to be obeyed at school, or students' contacts with peers and teachers, may have different levels of controllability for different students.

Konarzewski (1995:97) states that the dimensions described have their reflection in three main features of students' behaviour: their participation in school life, their life aspirations and their perseverance to reach the educational aims set by the school system.

These three features are not personality traits. It is, therefore, important to remember that teachers cannot evaluate students as individual beings on the basis of the assumption that if a student at school does not present any of the three features in his/her school performance, they are not reflected in his/her life at all, e.g. if a student does not have aspirations to obtain a very high grade in the final exam in maths, this does not mean s/he has no aspirations in his/her life.

As was said before, the three features characteristic of students' behaviour reflect the way that students define the school environment. Their active participation in school life is the answer to the friendliness of school environment. If a person feels respected and accepted, s/he feels the spontaneous need to act. On the other hand, lack of these feelings is the reason for students' withdrawal. Another important claim that seems obvious, although teachers often tend to forget about its importance, is that a condition necessary for the successful educational behaviour of students is their perception of school learning as being relevant to their future lives. Children who learn at comprehensive schools may exhibit more tendencies to waste time and neglect school duties because, contrary to students from vocational schools, they may lack awareness that what they learn will have practical use in their future lives. This claim also explains the fact that students only have aspirations to learn and persevere in their school work if they believe their effort will increase the probability of final success.

4. Creating a learning environment

4.1 Factors influencing the learning environment

There are many factors connected with the person of a teacher and learners, participants of every classroom interaction which are contributing to the creation of foreign language learning environment that is conducive to learning. The person of a teacher plays a significant role in shaping the classroom environment as s/he is the one who is responsible for successful and 'smooth' management of the teaching/learning process. It is also a teacher who stimulates

students' development as human beings facilitating both their self-discovery and realisation of their potential as FL learners and people as well.

4.2 The teacher

4.2.1 Teachers – individuals in the social context

As the nature of foreign language classroom interaction, and any interaction in general, means creating and maintaining social relationships, teacher's influence on classroom communication from the individual and social perspective needs consideration, too.

Trying to present some sort of general characteristics of teachers as a professional group it needs to be noted that in spite of having effort-demanding, but at the same time rewarding jobs, teachers are ordinary people who lead busy lives, have their own families they spend their off-work time with and also who have their own attitudes, beliefs and aspirations which partly affect their teaching behaviours but simultaneously distinguish one teacher from another.

Teachers are individual beings just as the learners are. On the other hand, they are social beings, too in the sense that they continuously interact with the learners, the curriculum, the syllabus and also with teaching tasks and materials in their classrooms (Fig. 1).

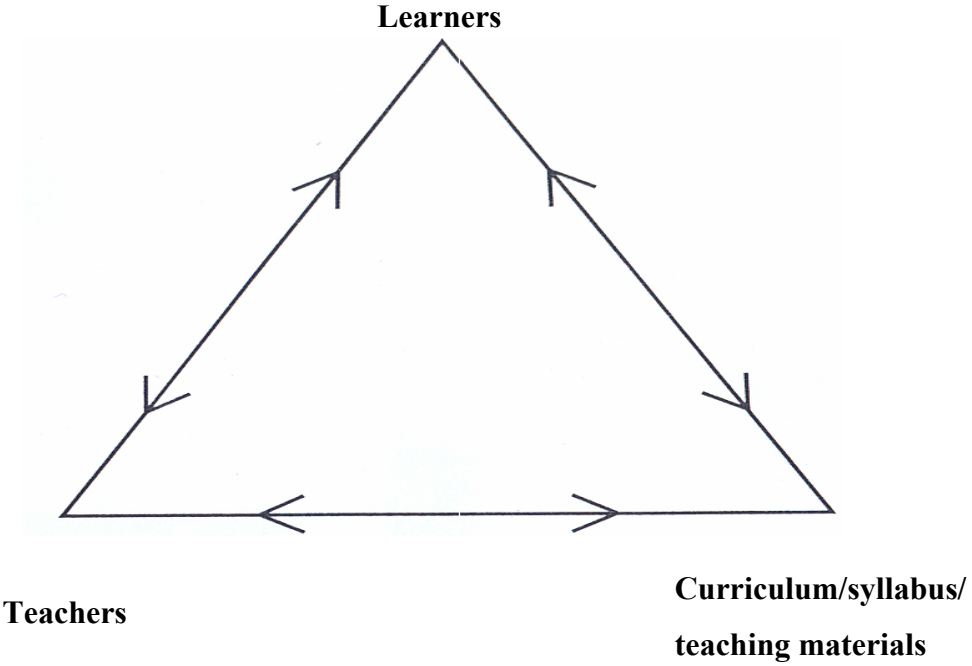

Fig. 1 Interaction in the classroom (James 2001:3)

In a broader context, teachers also constitute part of school they teach at, as well as part of the local community they work for, the country they live in and the international community they belong to. Teachers need to be aware of their roles which result from being a part of each social layer and they need to try both to find their own individuality in the place they work at and to establish strong links with participants of different layers of the educational community (Fig. 2).

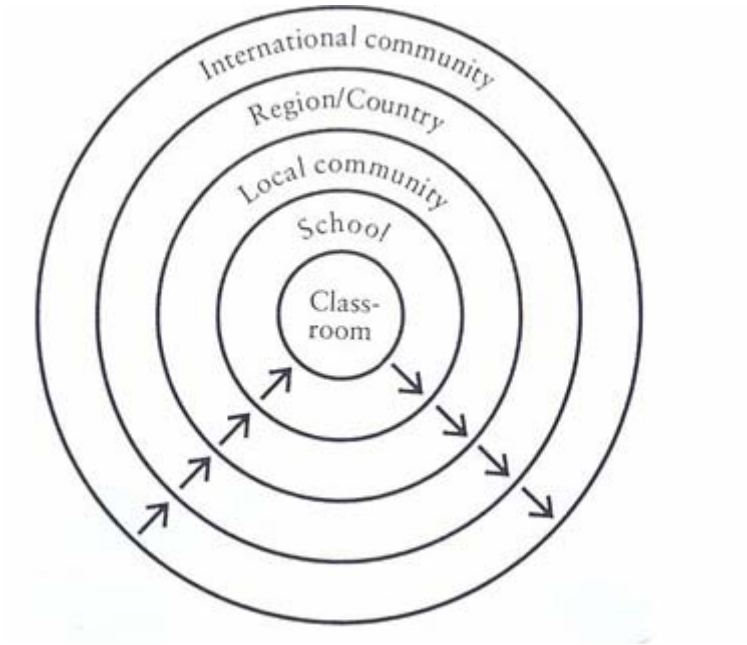

Fig.2 The social context of teaching and learning (James, 2001:4)

It is very important that teachers find their place in the social 'layer' of the system they function in as this will let them develop the potential of both their learners and themselves. Feeling of being 'the right person in the right place' gives teachers a springboard to self-actualise and realise themselves fully in many different social roles.

4.2.2 Teacher behaviour in the classroom

4.2.2.1 Factors influencing teacher classroom behaviour

Every teacher is an individual being with his/her own distinctive personality, attitudes, beliefs and resulting from this, preferences for different forms of behaviour which, being

characteristic of a given teacher, shape his/her didactic style. The factors which influence teachers' classroom behaviour most are:

- beliefs about learners and learning
- beliefs about themselves as individuals and professionals.

4.2.2.2 Beliefs about learners and learning

Among the many different factors responsible for how the teacher behaves during a foreign language lesson, teacher's beliefs about learners and learning are the most important as they underlie the teacher's way of thinking about the teaching/learning process. When teachers come to the classroom, they bring with them different assumptions concerning what will be taught in the course and how it will be taught (Brindley, 1984:95). What is more, both teachers and learners have different concepts of each other's roles in the teaching/learning process.

According to Richards and Lockhart (1992:30), the sources of teacher beliefs are mainly:

1. **teachers' own experience as language learners** – teacher beliefs reflect the way they were taught themselves when they were students
2. **experience of what works best** – 'hands on' teaching experience is the primary source of beliefs for many teachers
3. **established practice** – teacher beliefs are a reflection of the way language is taught within the school as an institution or within a school district.
4. **personality factors** – some teachers have their own preferences concerning different aspects of the teaching/learning process which match their personality
5. **educationally based or research-based principles** – teachers apply in the course those principles they learnt about during their studies, or from source literature
6. **principles derived from an approach or method** – teachers try to implement in their classes those methods and approaches which they believe to be effective.

Richards and Lockhart (1992:30) claim that what a teachers' beliefs system is based upon is 'the goals, values and beliefs teachers hold in relation to the content and process of teaching and their understanding of the system in which they work and their roles within it'. Those beliefs, however, are extremely hard to define and measure and therefore can be inferred from teachers' behaviour, rather than from what they claim to believe in (Williams and Burden, 1997:56).

It needs to be remembered that no matter whether a teacher acts spontaneously or from habit, their interpersonal behaviour in the classroom and therefore the classroom atmosphere they create, will be affected by the beliefs they have, more than by a particular methodology or the course-book they follow.

Teachers' beliefs, however, may be very different from those of the learners and therefore for the sake of the teaching/learning process teachers need to remember to explain to the learners the assumptions underlying their classroom behaviour, or to adjust what they do in the classroom to students' expectations to avoid misunderstanding and mistrust on the part of learners (Richards and Lockhart, 1992:35).

Teachers' assumptions concerning their learners influence the shape of teacher-learner relationships in the classroom and therefore have an impact on the classroom environment. According to Meighan (1990:42), there are at least seven ways in which teachers perceive their learners. Metaphorically, learners may be construed as:

- raw materials – can be moulded into a fine work of art but also manipulated according to the teacher's wishes,
- individual explorers – they explore the world for themselves being only helped by a teacher-facilitator,
- partners – they negotiate with a teacher-partner what they want to learn,
- democratic explorers – learners as a group decide upon different aspects of the teaching-learning process, for example, preferred student groupings, the teacher-expert only helps if asked
- receptacles – can only accept a certain amount of knowledge, according to the size of their IQ,
- clients – they know what they want to learn and how much time and effort they want to invest in the process,
- resisters- they do not want to learn and do so only because they are made to.

In relation to the above it may be concluded that the multiplicity of ways in which teachers perceive their learners will influence the nature of the teacher-learner relationship which may be depicted as a continuum with total teacher dominance as one extreme and total learner independence as the other. If teachers want to improve their relationships with students, they need to make their beliefs concerning learners explicit for themselves and try to find ways to bridge the gap between the beliefs they have and their actions.

Teachers' beliefs about learners are inextricably linked with those concerning the nature of the learning process and the beliefs that teachers hold about learning influence the approach they take to teaching. As Williams and Burden (1997:60) put it:

> *We can only be really effective teachers if we are clear in our minds what we mean by learning because only then can we know what kinds of learning outcomes we want our learners to achieve*.

In an attempt to group and describe the most popular approaches to learning Williams and Burden (1997) subsumed the conceptions concerning understanding of learning presented by Gow and Kember (1993) under two headings: *reproductive* (the first three) and *meaning-based* approaches (the subsequent three) for more convenient use (Table 2).

Approach		**Example**
Reproductive approach	Memorisation	Comprises learning vocabulary and grammar
	A quantitative increase in knowledge	Teacher explains to students grammar rules and transmits the knowledge of how language operates
	The acquisition of facts, procedures	Comprises teaching learners skills they might use in practice
Meaning-based approach	The abstraction of meaning	Teaching students techniques such as task-based listening or tasks requiring meaningful interaction
	An interpretative process aimed at the understanding of reality	The language is taught 'purposefully', i.e. with the use of techniques which help students describe and understand reality
	Some form of personal change	Teacher chooses activities which have personal significance to the learner and lead to some personal benefit of the latter

Table 2 Approaches to learning (based on Williams and Burden, 1997:60

The choice that teachers make between one of the 'reproductive' approaches - based on acquiring knowledge or 'meaning-based' approaches – based on processing knowledge depend to a great extent on the teachers' awareness of what they want their learners to achieve. Every teacher will find among those approaches presented a reflection of his/her own beliefs. It needs to be remembered, however, that the approaches mentioned cannot be viewed

as mutually exclusive and that most teachers' views represent a mixture of those enumerated above.

4.2.2.3 Teacher beliefs about themselves as people and professionals

The way teachers behave in the classroom depends on their beliefs about themselves both as individuals and professionals. The teaching profession is characterised by a great degree of autonomy and changeability which influence teachers' classroom behaviour. Thus, teachers must make the beliefs concerning their abilities as language teachers, their own strengths and weaknesses as professionals and ordinary people explicit, as it is the knowledge of oneself that is the prerequisite for successful teacher development, not only in professional, but in all spheres of human activity.

Teachers must be aware of the fact that what they think of themselves will influence the teaching/learning process. This is connected with what a teacher brings to the teaching-learning relationship, whether s/he creates supportive learning environment or not and how, if at all, s/he helps the learner to develop as a whole person.

The way teachers perceive themselves has a great influence on the learners, too. Teachers who lack self-esteem cannot build the self-esteem of others and those who do not accept learners make it difficult for them to accept themselves. The ideal quality of teachers, as suggested by Williams and Burden (1997:63, should be that of 'permissiveness' – a concept central to the humanistic approach which may be understood as 'permission to be oneself' or in other words – freedom to have one's own ideas, values and beliefs. Knowing that in any action performed in the classroom, teachers define themselves as persons, they should let themselves really be their true 'selves' for the benefit of the personal growth and development of their learners.

4.2.2.4 Management strategies

Each teacher has a set of management strategies – ways of behaving in the classroom which s/he uses to avoid all situations which interfere with the teaching/learning process. The strategies that teachers use depend on whether they focus more on the syllabus and the course-book, or on the learners' emotional needs and the atmosphere in the classroom. Komorowska (2001:83-85) presents the following typology:

1. Teachers who focus on didactic aims have a tendency to use:

- **task therapy**: a teacher asks students to do a lot of different tasks and exercises and carries out a lesson at fast pace. In that way students have no time to cause any discipline problems but on the other hand the teacher leaves no space for student autonomy
- **strategy of routine**: to avoid problems with discipline or with understanding of new instructions a teacher carries out every lesson in an identical way preserving each time the same structure. Although the use of the strategy leaves little space for disruptive behaviour and gives shy and poor students a sense of security which results form the predictability of the lesson stages, the lesson is in most cases monotonous
- **strategy of withdrawal**: a teacher seems not to notice any problematic situations in the classroom and therefore s/he does not react. In this way students do what they want. However, use of this strategy lets the teacher save his/her energy in the case of tiredness or a bad mood.

2. Those teachers who focus on emotional aims use:
   - **strategy of power**: to prevent any possible interferences to the lesson on the part of the learners, the teacher creates in the classroom an atmosphere of terror. His/her attention focuses also on students' appearance and the way they speak and behave. Teachers do all they can to make students do their will. Although there are no discipline problems during lessons, the use of this strategy creates many negative feelings towards teachers and the subject itself. This may be the reason for a communicative block, too as it slows down the development of speaking skills due to learners' fear to talk
   - **strategy of socialising**: teachers use this strategy to ensure a good atmosphere in the classroom and a good relationship with students even at the cost of giving up teaching standards. In the short run, students like the way the teacher conducts the lesson and the atmosphere in the classroom is relaxing. However, in the long run discipline problems appear as students lose respect for the teacher who lets them do whatever they want just to be liked
   - **strategy of negotiation**: the teacher gives students a choice in some questions which concern the teaching/learning process. S/he consults them and takes into consideration their opinions and preferences creating in this way relationships between him/her and learners, which are based on partnership and mutual respect of the roles the two sides

play in the classroom. However, because it is not stated clearly what students may do and what they must not do, the lesson may become a promise-threat game, e.g. 'We will not do what you ask until you...'.

The choice of strategies that teachers use in the classroom depend snot only on teachers' focus on syllabus or students' emotional aims. What is also taken into account is students' age, their language level and course expectations that they have. The same strategy may have completely different effects depending on individual student's features and needs.

4.2.2.5 Teacher body language

A teacher is the one who runs the lesson and is therefore continuously observed by his/her students. They look at him/her to understand what it is that s/he wants to tell them. Teachers should therefore be aware of the fact that they communicate with students by using not only verbal, but also non-verbal, language. They also need to be able, by means of observation, to comment on how students perceive their body language, which of the gestures, body movements and facial expressions encourage students to work in the classroom and which have a negative influence on their contacts with the teacher and therefore on the attitude to the subject s/he teaches. In order to collect the required information the teachers are recommended to become attentive observers of their students' reactions.

Conscious use of the body language in the classroom makes it a powerful tool which facilitates mutual communication and lets teachers replace what they want to say with just one gesture or a facial expression. Teaching a foreign language also involves preparing students to send, receive and understand non-verbal messages, which is especially important at the lower levels of language competence where non-verbal signals facilitate comprehension of what is expressed verbally.

Teacher's body language in the classroom includes:

- eye contact with students: keeping eye contact when talking to a student lets the teacher focus the student's attention on what is being said to him/her but it also indicates that the teacher is interested in who the student is as an individual and what s/he wants to say
- facial expressions, e.g. smiling, grinning: these are infinite sources of information for students as they are means the teacher uses to express his/her approval, disapproval or lack of understanding. Thus, they may be successfully used to motivate students to talk in the classroom

- moving, turning, e.g. movements like nodding and shaking the head which the teacher uses may show whether s/he agrees or disagrees with what students say
- gestures: 'schematic' – patterns of behaviour characteristic of a certain situation, 'mimic' – imitating real situations, 'symbolic' – expressing a thought or an idea in an abstract way, e.g. teachers use these gestures to explain to students the meaning of words and expressions in a non-verbal way, 'didactic' – used when the teacher presents new material, e.g. talks about inversion in the Present Simple tense, 'protective' and 'defensive' gestures – the teacher uses them unconsciously to react to students' behaviour directed at him/her as a person (Collins, 2002)
- posture: whether the teacher sits, stands up or moves around in the classroom has significant influence on students' perception of the teacher's roles in the teaching/learning process and his/her engagement in what s/he does. It also influences the level of students' attention
- physical contact, e.g. patting on the student' shoulder to express approval
- proxemics: the physical and psychological distance between teachers and students indicates the quality of mutual contact and the degree of openness to one another.

The way that teachers use their body language in the classroom depends mostly on the message that teachers want to send by means of this transmission channel. Some forms of body language are used to motivate students to learn and others to express teacher's approval and disapproval. The way that teachers use their body to communicate with learners is also influenced by the teacher's:

- sex: female-teachers are perceived to be better at interpreting body language and they seem to use more gestures aimed at lowering the distance between the teacher and her learners (they are believed to be more caring than male-teachers),
- the culture the teacher lives in: many gestures have different meanings and evoke different reactions depending on the country they are used in,
- didactic style: authoritarian-style teachers have different body language than, for example, paternal-style teachers
- roles in the classroom: taking up different roles involves a change in behaviour (the teacher-motivator has different body language than the teacher-assessor),
- stage of a lesson: the presentation stage, for example, requires from the teacher different behaviour than a controlled practice stage which is connected with the

change of a role from a knowledge-giver to assessor. The stage of a lesson also influences the intensity of signals sent by teachers by means of body language

- age of students: to ensure better communication with students, teachers tend to adjust their behaviour to students' expectations, e.g. a teacher in the kindergarten will behave differently than the one working with a group of teenagers,
- students' own non-verbal behaviour: observing students' reactions to teacher's words and behaviour the latter draws conclusions concerning, for example, the level of students' understanding of grammatical explanations.

Teachers' awareness of the signals they send to students by means of their body language is very important in foreign language teaching, as according to, for example behaviourist theory, students' progress in learning depends to a great extent on the teacher's feedback (both verbal and non-verbal) to the students' language performance. Without reaction from the teacher - expression of approval or disapproval, the teaching/learning process lacks the very important stage of reinforcement which may result in students' frustration and lowering their motivation to learn. Teachers' focus on their own body language, as well as on that of students', helps the former to understand what signals they sent and what students' reactions to the signals were. Also, teachers' own observations of their body language in the classroom enable them to 'read' correctly what students think of them as professionals, to reduce the forms of body language which learners find discouraging and to develop such ways of expressing thoughts and emotions which will be most desirable to create an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Teachers must learn how to use this powerful tool which is their body language. They need to be aware that, according to Mehrabian (1971:61) we get only seven per cent of all information sent to us by means of the vocal channel. Thirty-eight per cent is transmitted to us by means of the tone of voice and fifty-five per cent by means of body language. Research by the American psychologist, Birdwhistell (1970:34) shows that what we learn by means of the vocal channel is facts and such information as a person's mood, attitude and real feelings are 'read' from the body language.

Non-verbal communication is, undoubtedly, an inseparable aspect of any human activity including foreign language learning and teaching. It must, however, be remembered that classroom communication is never fully natural. In everyday communication people rarely show the so called 'poker face' – a facial expression deprived of all emotions and feelings. Teachers use it quite frequently, especially when they wait for a student's answer to some question, as they do not want to give their learners any hints concerning what to say or

how to say it. Another unnatural element of non-verbal communication used by teachers is exaggeration in for example, stressing certain words to make it easier for students to understand teacher's questions. The pitch of voice is also usually higher than in any casual conversation. What is more, we may observe that in classroom interaction the teacher's gestures and movements are frequently greatly reduced to help students focus their attention on the teacher's words, not actions. Last but not the least in the 'unnaturalnes' of classroom communication is the already mentioned lack of redundancy in the speech of the teacher who conducting a lesson wants, above all, to be understood by the students. That is why simple language as well as short and precise instructions are used during FL lessons as in instructional classroom language there is no place for hesitation or changing one's mind which are so characteristic of natural communication.

Not only the teacher's non-verbal behaviour but also his/her auto-presentation in the classroom and outside it is for the students an indicator of who the teacher is and what his/her attitudes to teaching, to them, to him/herself and the world in general are. The choice of clothes, make-up, jewellery, perfumes and also such personal belongings as a wristwatch or a bag constitute for students a perfect basis for observation and drawing conclusions concerning different aspects of the teacher's life, such as the teacher's self-esteem, socioeconomic class or personality. Students are very good observers who easily 'read' the messages sent (consciously or not) through the 'hidden dimension' of teachers' behaviour (Hall, 1966). Teachers must be aware of the fact that negative auto-presentation influences their students' mood and motivation to learn.

Although a person's body language depends on many different factors which are beyond teachers' control, such as physical conditions (anatomy), type of personality (extrovert, introvert) and character (choleric, sanguine, melancholic, phlegmatic), an attentive teacher-observer will try to do as much as possible to create a positive image of him/herself as a professional and will try to monitor his/her behaviour (at least to a certain extent) to create in the classroom the atmosphere of trust and friendliness and above all to show students the clarity of his/her intentions. A teacher aware of the influence of his/her body language on students knows that all positive emotions facilitate learning and remembering, while the negative emotions s/he brings with him/her into the classroom create in learners an affective filter, a kind of a mental block which makes it much more difficult to learn a foreign language.

4.3 Factors within teacher control

Among those factors influencing the foreign language lesson atmosphere there are those which depend on the teacher's skills to organise the teaching-learning process, to share knowledge with students and to interact with them successfully. As teachers represent different levels of those skills, students' interest in the subject matter, as well as their motivation to learn and interact with the teacher and one another, differs depending on how skilful the teacher is.

According to Komorowska (2001) it is possible to distinguish four types of skills which influence the process of teaching a foreign language and which teachers use in the classroom:

- **pedagogical skills**: the ability a teacher has to organise and manage a language lesson, e.g. to prepare tasks and exercises, to correct students' mistakes, to develop students' autonomy, etc.,
- **didactic skills**: the ability to teach, to share the knowledge the teacher possesses with students which is connected with the teacher's work experience and generally with his/her preparation for the lesson,
- **language skills**: the ability to talk about the foreign language culture and to use the foreign language correctly and fluently using a whole variety of different grammatical constructions and rich vocabulary which is connected with the level of the teacher's language competence and therefore the teacher's education,
- **integrative skills**: the ability to communicate with students and to build with them strong relationships based on trust and friendliness. The term 'integrative skills' also signifies the teacher's readiness to help students both in learning and in their life problems, to be loyal to them and to try to give them the support they need. These skills find their reflection in the way the teacher expresses his/her approval and disapproval, assesses students' work, deals with discipline problems and uses his/her body language to communicate with students by means of the non-verbal channel (Komorowska, 2001).

Other factors which also to a different degree influence classroom interaction are:

- lesson attractiveness
- topic selection and language focus of the lesson
- the choice of teaching method and teaching materials

- teaching aids
- language games
- keeping students' attention
- discipline in the classroom
- limiting the use of the mother tongue
- responding to students.

Lesson attractiveness

If only a teacher is able and willing to prepare a lesson which appeals to students' interest, in most cases students respond enthusiastically and learn what the teacher intended. Whether a language lesson is perceived by the students to be attractive or not depends mostly on:

- the topic of the lesson,
- the use of teaching materials and aids,
- the use of language games,
- teacher's feedback to students,
- the teacher's skills.

Topic selection and language focus of the lesson

When a teacher prepares a lesson, the first questions to ask should be connected with the language focus of the lesson, for example: *What is the objective of the lesson? What is it that I need to teach my students following the syllabus that I have? How can I make my students interested and active?* Answering those questions will help teachers to focus their attention on preparing a lesson plan best contributing to realising the lesson objectives and simultaneously attractive to students.

One of the points to consider when planning a lesson is the choice of its topic presented usually at the beginning of the lesson. A topic of the lesson makes students aware of the objective of the lesson and stimulates their interest in the new language material to be learned by them. Thus, not only should the topic be relevant to students' needs and interests, but it should also convince learners it is worth learning the new language material, e.g. by indicating students what real life situations the newly learned language material may be used for.

To focus students' attention on the topic of the lesson and its contents, the teacher may start the class with some kind of a warm-up activity in the form of a simple guessing-game or

a quiz, containing, for example thought-provoking questions to arouse students' interest and stimulate their imagination.

Some typical mistakes that teachers make at the very beginning of the lesson are:

- the assumption that the learners must learn and will learn whatever is taught,
- not making use of students' own experiences (personalisation),
- a "passive" start (e.g. 'Open your books on page…'),
- lack of a warm-up activity,
- not informing students of what the aim of the lesson is,
- not encouraging students to talk and participate actively in the classes.

If in the first stage of the lesson, the teacher fails to 'win' learners' attention, s/he may not achieve the lesson's objectives and additionally may have to deal with disruptive behaviour resulting from boredom and/or lack of interest. Students who are not engaged in the lesson try to find other, in their opinion more attractive, ways to 'kill' the time.

The choice of teaching method and materials

The choice of teaching method is crucial for successful teaching and good teacher-learner relationship as it is an appropriately chosen method that creates space for students' activity. At this stage the teacher has to carefully select the best way to present and work with the new material, bearing in mind that learning involves mainly understanding and memorising new information. The methods and materials used in the foreign language classroom will only contribute to students' progress in learning a language and to the creation of an atmosphere conducive to learning if they are interesting and appealing to students' interests.

To make sure that the teaching methods and materials the teacher is planning to use in the language course, or a single lesson, are attractive to students, s/he must always take into consideration the following features of a language group:

- students' age,
- language level,
- cognitive abilities
- expectations towards a foreign language,
- motivation and interests,
- individual learning styles
- size of the language group.

A careful selection of methods and materials based on the teacher's knowledge of who the students are and what they expect from the teacher and the course prevents lesson breakdowns, waste of time, discipline problems and a drop in students' motivation to learn the language.

Teaching aids

A lesson which is attractive to students very often involves the use of different teaching aids which facilitate learning. The teacher may help students concentrate on the subject of the lesson using both visual (photos, posters, postcards, maps, calendars) and auditory aids (CD's, radio, TV, video, background music). Teaching aids attract students' attention because of their variety: different shapes, colours and sounds not only activate the right hemisphere of the brain, the one responsible for emotions stimulating this way students' motivation to learn but they also activate mechanisms of visual and auditory memory which fosters remembering.

When the teacher's aim is to create in the classroom an atmosphere conducive to learning which enables the lesson's objectives to be best achieved, the use of teaching aids is highly recommended provided that their choice is adjusted to the lesson's focus and time structure.

Language games

Komorowska (2001:55) states that it is beneficial for students and the teaching/learning process to use language games in the classroom, instead of traditional vocabulary and grammar exercises which students find monotonous. The educational result obtained in both cases will be the same – students will practise the use of the language. however, when playing language games they will simultaneously be more engaged in doing the language task as games not only activate students' imagination but they also introduce innovation and involve co-operation as well as competition which students usually find attractive.

Keeping student attention

Students' concentration on the teaching/learning process is the prerequisite for successful language learning and it is the teacher's task to keep students' attention on the lesson's contents. To do so, teachers need to remember to:

- structure the lesson clearly by pointing out distinctly the beginning and the ending of every stage,
- use a lot of short activities instead of a few longer ones,

- ensure unpredictability of the order of students' responses (students need to be attentive all the time as they do not know when the teacher will nominate them to answer his/her question),
- carry out lessons which are attractive to students.

Only then do they stand a chance to prevent all forms of students' disruptive behaviour and to carry out a lesson according to the plan.

Discipline in the classroom

If the teacher wants to create an atmosphere conducive to learning, s/he must be able to ensure appropriate conditions for students' work. During the language lesson and, in fact, any lesson, students must be quiet and peaceful – as these are prerequisites for the concentration necessary to learn anything. The teacher must be therefore able to firstly, prevent and secondly, deal with disruptive behaviour. The teacher's task in the language classroom is to teach the language and not to change the lesson scenario to talk about students' bad behaviour.

There are many different reasons why students misbehave. According to Harmer (2001), the most common causes are 'boredom, tiredness, lack of understanding of what the teacher says and the desire to get the teacher's, or other students' attention'. It needs mentioning that when students do not like the teacher, they do not behave well in order to make him/her angry and to ruin the lesson. That is why the quality of teacher-learner interaction is so much in focus of these analyses.

Teachers may use various verbal and non-verbal strategies to deal with students' misbehaviour (Table 3).

Verbal strategies	Non-verbal strategies
Ask a student to repeat a simple sentence after the teacher	Lower their voice when talking to students
Quickly change one activity into another	Make eye-contact with misbehaving students
Insert the name of a misbehaving student into the teacher's talk.	Go up to the bench of a misbehaving student without stopping the lesson

Table 3 Class management strategies (based on Komorowska, 2001: 75)

In order to prevent discipline problems teachers are advised to establish together with their students a code of conduct – a set of rules governing students' behaviour in the

classroom. To maximize the effectiveness of the code application, students should themselves define what the consequences for breaking the code will be.

Including students' suggestions in the code of conduct has numerous advantages:

- students are more motivated not to break the rules,
- they are encouraged to think creatively,
- they become more aware that teachers are human beings and have needs, too,
- students' engagement in establishing the code will eliminate the rules that students would perceive as unacceptable,
- teachers will not have to put so much effort into keeping discipline as all students will be responsible for it,
- clearly defined rules, together with a list of the consequences of breaking them, will prevent many classroom conflicts.

Establishing the code of conduct together with students is according to Gordon (1998: 288) the best lesson of democracy 'in action' showing students how difficult it is to make rules and how satisfying it is to participate in the process of teacher-learner co-operation.

Limiting the use of the mother tongue

An appropriate environment conducive to foreign language learning is the one which stimulates the use of the language. No matter how good the teacher-learner relationship is and how interesting teaching materials are, if students constantly use their mother tongue in the classroom they will not progress in learning a foreign language. Feeling that they do not really progress in mastering the language will make the lesson look less attractive than it really is. It is the teacher's task to organise the learning process in such a way that the foreign language will be used in classroom discourse. To make this possible a teacher may first teach students the language of instruction to encourage foreign language use at every stage of the lesson. What is more, to minimize the use of mother tongue by students, teachers also need to remember to:

- translate only those words which take too much time or are very hard or impossible to explain in the target language(e.g. proper names, abstract nouns),
- avoid literal translation,
- use mother tongue only to ensure proper and complete understanding of some important information, e.g. in the case of grammatical explanation,
- set clear guidelines concerning the use of the mother tongue by students,

- choose appropriate tasks adjusted to students' level,
- create an English environment by, for example, 'anglicising' students' names,
- use persuasion to influence students' use of the mother tongue (Harmer, 2001).

Constant use of the foreign language in a lesson both for on-task and off-task communication prepares students for natural communication in this language, develops speaking and listening skills and gives students the impression that they are immersed in the language which they perceive to be a live tool of teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction and not just some abstract idea.

Responding to students

The quality of teacher-learner interaction in the classroom is inextricably connected with the way the teacher reacts to students' responses in the foreign language. Teaching a foreign language may only be successful if the teacher is interested in what students say, reacts to it promptly and willingly which is the proof of his/her attentive listening, and expresses approval or disapproval of their language production (Komorowska, 2001:175).

In the teaching-learning process teachers often focus too much on correcting students' mistakes (form focus) and forget to praise students for expressing their own opinions (content focus). Constant criticism on the part of the teacher leads to learners' inhibition and/or their unwillingness to participate in the lesson.

The classroom atmosphere may facilitate language learning only when it is based on positive teacher's reactions to any attempt at communication that students make. Thus, teachers need to remember that:

1. what students want to express is in the opinion of most of them more important than the form they use to do so
2. frequent expressing of approval by the teacher builds up students' motivation
3. expressing critical remarks by the teacher leads to the development of communicative competence only if the number of negative comments is balanced with positive, supporting reactions of approval.

4.4 Factors beyond teacher control

There are many factors which shape teacher-learner relationship in the classroom, and which cannot be influenced by the teacher, for example some important educational decisions

influencing school life as the date of final exams, or other depending on circumstances. The factors that teachers have no or only a little influence on are:

- the learners' profiles,
- the size of the class,
- the group composition,
- classroom interiors,
- weather, time of the day, the position of the subject in the timetable.

Learner profiles

If a teacher wants to create atmosphere conducive to learning, the first thing s/he must do is to get to know who the learners are. The teacher should try to create a learner profile for each student or, at least, a group profile when preparing individual learners' profiles would prove too exhaustive and time consuming due to the large number of students in the group. What James (2001) suggests, is 'a mini-case study' as a useful data collection method for busy practising teachers. This will provide the teacher with a framework to view each learner as a real person, an individual. A mini-case study should consist of two stages:

1. a particular student's general description formulated at the beginning of the school year
2. a more detailed record of any change or progress in the learner, written, for example, at the end of the term (Fig. 3).

Learner profile 1 (baseline)	**Learner profile 2**
General characteristics of a learner	Identifying change, development and progress in a learner or a reaction to a particular teaching activity

Fig 3 James's framework for a mini-case study (James, 2001:117)

The benefit of constructing a learner profile is that it facilitates building a good rapport with learners. Knowing who the learners are, the teacher may meet their needs concerning different aspects of the teaching-learning process, such as the choice of methods and teaching aids more easily and therefore avoid many discipline problems and critical incidents resulting from students' dissatisfaction with the way of teaching.

A collection of learning profiles of students is a powerful tool which enables the teacher to take an individual approach in teaching. Spotting small changes in behaviour as well as in each student's progress and his/her breakdowns in learning the language makes the teacher aware of what kind of help a particular student needs to succeed. What is more, this kind of database in the teacher's hands allows for the introduction of personalisation in the lesson, for example in the controlled practice stage the teacher may ask students to do a translation task prepared by him/her beforehand and including facts (preferably funny ones) from students' lives, e.g. 'Tom loves blondes', 'Kasia always paints her nails green', etc.

This kind of 'personalised' language activity gives students the impression that they - as individual beings, matter in the process of teaching. They come to the conclusion that the process does not take place somewhere beyond them but that they are actively involved in it. Making lesson activities relevant to students' experiences raises their motivation and eagerness to learn.

Gathering information about learners may take many different forms. The most common are a learner questionnaire and a semi-structured interview with a learner. Another fairly successful method which is gaining more and more popularity is a learner portfolio in which the teacher collects all the particular student's works. Tests and essays, especially those the topics of which refer to students' feelings and interests, are an invaluable source of information not only about students' language progress but also to a certain degree about students as individuals.

Size of class

It is commonly believed that the size of class influences students' progress as it affects, to a great extent, the amount of time that teachers devote to giving feedback, i.e. to correcting or expressing approval of each individual learner's language performance. What is more, a small class means fewer discipline problems and therefore more time for teaching. Students work in pairs more frequently and the teacher-learner relations are individualised. It can be said that members of small language classes perceive school as the place of individual effort and are therefore more concentrated on work while for students from a big class school may be perceived in the first place to be an area of social meeting, full of small hermetic groups of people who share the same interests.

Group dynamics

'Group dynamics', the term used to describe the way groups and individuals act and react to changing circumstances was coined by Lewis (1943), the founder of the movement to study groups scientifically. In the classroom context group dynamics mean all processes resulting form norms, roles, relations accepted by the group and also developments and effects on behaviour which are triggered by teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions. Consequently, they cannot be reduced to the characteristics of individual members of the group but to the whole group (Hadfield,1992). In this sense a language class means 'an autonomous social organism which develops and changes according to its own laws.' (Konarzewski, 1995 :132). Within the class it is possible to distinguish different groups of students, for example leaders, i.e. individuals who are the most popular in the group, outsiders – those who do not belong to any group and followers – those who follow the leader. On the basis of regular class observations, or more advanced sociometric measures, the teacher is able to identify the social position of each student in the class.

Williams and Burden (1997:194) state that 'for a co-operative environment to be established, it is important to look into the nature of the interaction and processes that occur within groups of learners'. It means that teachers need to pay close attention to the class structure. Being aware of what place each individual student occupies in it will help teachers to plan group work and pair work in such a way that the groups will be more or less socially balanced. On the other hand, teachers' awareness of the group structure may lead to total didactic failure when, for example, a teacher will place all leaders in one group and all outsiders in another when carrying out classroom discussion.

The term 'class structure' means not only the social structure of a language class but its organisational structure as well Most classes in state schools consist of administratively chosen students who are, more or less, of the same age and who have a similar learning history. Every member of that heterogeneous group gets from the teacher the same information, instructions and tasks which are evaluated identically for every member of the group. Such an administrative division into classes is harmful to students as individual beings. One solution to the problem is division of secondary schools into comprehension and vocational schools and further, the division of classes into thematic profiles within those schools. The divisions, however, do not introduce different scales of progress measurement for good and poor students. They only group together those students who have similar interests and skills.

In the case of foreign language classes in most Polish schools today, the classes are divided into two groups of learners of different language competence. The selection tool is a placement test that students take at the beginning of the first school year in the given school. This solution to the competence problem greatly facilitates teachers' work. However, it is not ideal because still within each of the two groups students' language competence may vary significantly.

Classroom interiors

Pielstick (1988) observes that students' moods and motivation are influenced by the interior of the classroom they learn in: its decoration, ventilation, noise level, etc. Teachers do not have much influence on the size of the classroom, or the colour of the walls, but when it comes to the interior decoration they may do a lot to help their students feel 'saturated' in the foreign culture by decorating the classroom with posters, pictures, flags, students' project work connected with the foreign language culture, etc. All this raises student interest in the subject, helps them to concentrate on the lesson and constantly reminds them of the necessity of learning a language to be able to communicate with the people who live in the places shown in the pictures and posters which they may see in the classroom.

However, in many Polish schools classrooms look almost the same. In the central place there is the teacher's desk with a blackboard hanging on the wall behind it and a few rows of chairs in front of it. Sometimes, there are also a few visual aids on the walls and some shelves and bookcases which are very often almost empty. This scenery gives learners information that the classroom is a place where they are supposed to sit in and learn rather than move around and explore, because even if a teacher allowed them to leave their places, there would not be anything interesting to find.

Konarzewski (1995:129) states that according to different observations, traditional decoration and design of the classroom 'limits the social contacts of a student and reduces them to illegal forms of cheating'. What is more, the layout of classroom benches facing the teacher's desk determines the way that teacher's attention is divided among the students which means that the teacher devotes more time to students sitting in the 'triangle', the basis of which is created by the first row of benches. Therefore, those students who sit in remote corners of the classroom often feel more free to do whatever they want, without fear of being 'caught' by the teacher. Additionally, the traditional seating arrangement emphasizes the division of classroom into teacher's and students' space (zones) which may lead to the conclusion that the aim of such division is to keep discipline in the classroom and show the

students where their place is. Such sitting arrangement does not contribute to students' active involvement in the lesson.

Weather, time of the day, the position of the course in the timetable

External factors such as the weather, the time of the day, or the position of a language lesson among other courses in the students' timetable also have some influence on the atmosphere of the language lesson. When it is hot and sunny, students find it difficult to concentrate on learning as they would prefer to spend the time outside. When, for example they are tired, they are often absent-minded and unwilling to co-operate with the teacher. When it is winter, or when it is raining, or late they feel sleepy and the teacher needs to do his/her best to motivate them to perform any action.

4.5 Social and psychological factors influencing learner behaviour in the classroom

Successful teaching depends not only on the factors commented upon above, but it is also influenced by students' individual features, both social and psychological. To present and understand the behaviour of learners at school we need to understand how these features influence the way students perceive the conditions they function in. The social features which constitute the basis for comparison of individual learner's attitudes and which do not depend on students are: sex, social background and group dynamics, while the psychological features comprise: students' system of values in life, their intelligence, self-esteem as well as their attitudes to the subject and the teacher.

Sex

It is commonly believed that in the primary school girls get better grades than boys. In secondary education these differences in achievement disappear. In the adult life it sometimes turns out that females do not go into further education at all or simply start their professional life later for the sake of starting a family and rearing children. Recently, however, a lot of changes have been observed here as women much more frequenly than before want to realise their potential not only as mothers but also as professionals at the same time. It must be remembered that professional status is strictly connected with the level of formal education required to do a certain job and the level of education one gets is connected with how many years one decides to devote to education. It is therefore men who usually study longer and

who later on occupy positions of higher status, often earning better money than women doing the same job.

Konarzewski (1995:100) explains that although many studies show that there are no differences between the sexes as far as intelligence is concerned, it is the way that teachers treat girls as learners at school that contributes to the fact that finally the girls professionally do worse than boys. From the very beginning of their school days girls are thought to have more qualities which facilitate school success than boys. They are more disciplined and sociable, they find it easier to concentrate on a given task, they are more scrupulous and more persevering in whatever they do. Because they are less problematic to teach, teachers have a more open and friendly attitude towards them than towards boys, who therefore get more attention, guidance, supervision and criticism. However, the consequence of the situation is the fact that girls are less resistant to the teacher's critical remarks than boys and tend to place all blame for teacher's dissatisfaction on their own lack of creativity or intelligence rather than on some external factors, for example teacher's attitude to them. Konarzewski (1995:104) stresses that it is not the girl's personality but the teacher's way of treating girls in a friendly, caring, parent-like manner that is responsible for excessive self-criticism and the tendency that many girls have to withdraw when facing problems at later stages of education.

Social background

The place which a student's family occupies in the class structure of society is a factor which, to a certain degree, determines the learner's educational success (Fontana, 1981). Konarzewski (1995) indicates that according to different research in the field, the chances for educational success generally:

1. increase proportionally to the size of a region the learner lives in, i.e. the chance is bigger in cities more than in towns, in towns rather than in the country, etc.,
2. depend on the learner's family socioeconomic status, i.e. the families which occupy a higher social position give their children better educational opportunities (richer and better educated parents create better conditions to live and learn for their children),
3. are not high in certain types of families, e.g. dysfunctional families or families with many children because of difficult living conditions.

Although social background has a great influence on the learner's educational opportunities, this is not the only factor which is connected with the student's family. Another factor of significance is the value system a young person adopts from his/her family members.

The system of values

The opinions that parents, older siblings and other relatives who are important in the student's life hold about school and teachers have a great influence on the student's own perception of education. If the family appreciates school learning, a girl or a boy perceives it as having great value and finds it easier to cope with school requirements and to meet teachers' expectations. On the other hand, if parents despise teachers and the educational system and openly criticize them in their children's presence, the value of education from the student's perspective must decrease.

Konarzewski (1995:120) writes of two other regularities observed:

1. the value of school education also decreases when children become more and more independent from their parents. It is especially easy to observe at the time of adolescence when children tend to rebel against any authority no matter whether parental or school
2. the value of education is strictly connected with, as Konarzewski calls it 'family culture' – the attitude to education characteristic of one family which does not change from generation to generation. This factor determines the vision of the future profession for children in the family. In the case of the lower social class families, the visions are very clear and detailed. Parents know what they want their son or daughter to do in the future and they provide the child only with the things which are necessary for their vision to come true. Families from higher social class give their children a free hand in choosing their career. They only stimulate young people's aspirations and motivation. The consequence of the two attitudes is that the parents from the former group define the type and number of schools for their children, while those from the latter group perceive every school their children attend to as the next step to take up the profession that young people dream about.

Intelligence

According to Konarzewski (1995: 109), 'intelligence is one of the features of personality and it constitutes the skill of transferring information in the process of adaptation to new conditions'. It is generally believed that the more intelligent the child is, the better s/he does at school and that children from lower social strata families are less intelligent and therefore have worse school results.

Although discussion concerning the influence of intelligence on learner's school success is still open, Konarzewski (1995) is convinced that an educational success or failure

do not depend much on that particular feature. He indicates that the coefficient of correlation between the socioeconomic status of a family and a child's intelligence has almost zero value, which means that the child's failure at school does not depend on his/her lack of intelligence, but rather on disadvantageous social conditions.

So far too little has been discovered in the process of research in connection with what intelligence really depends on to be able to answer the 'nature or nurture' dilemma. Thus, each teacher has to approach the question of student's intelligence somewhat intuitively, taking into consideration the particular educational and social context an individual student exists in.

Student self-esteem

Although it is difficult to measure self-esteem, there is evidence that the way children feel about themselves affects their academic performance and determines the kind of adults they will become. That is why it is a crucial task for teachers to take an approach to teaching which will enhance students' self-esteem, as how the students' emotional needs are catered for will determine their success in learning a foreign language.

When a learner comes into the classrooom to learn a foreign language and his/her self-esteemis not high, it is easy to predict that the 'classroom encounter' with the new culture, as well as grammatical, lexical and phonetic systems will be difficult for him/her. To build an atmosphere conducive to learning, the teacher must ensure that all students feel able to understand the new culture and to learn the language. Awareness of the learner's profile will prove very useful here as this will help the teacher to 'notice' those students in the language group who need attention and appraisal due to their low self-esteem. James (2001) gives the following practical recommendations for a foreign language teachers to follow when they want to enhance their students' self-esteem:

1. *Learners self-evaluate*: Encourage learners to self-evaluate, for example by reviewing their learning achievements at the end of coursebook units.
2. *Listen to learners*: Ask learners and get them to talk about their feelings, problems, etc. (…)
3. *Learners take risks*: Learners try out new language without being corrected by the teacher, increasing their confidence.
4. *Projects*: producing tangible results, which all can take pride in and display.
5. *Consider attitudes when planning*: When planning lessons, teachers think explicitly how these will contribute towards learners' self-esteem, confidence, etc.
6. *Praise learners*: Reward good performance by saying 'Well done' (…).

(James, 2001:187)

Bearing the above guidelines in mind when conducting a lesson, makes it possible for foreign language teachers to boost up students' self-esteem for the benefit of classroom interaction and the students' progress in learning a foreign language.

Student attitude to the subject

Teacher's observations of their students' work and language progress indicate that the attitude towards the subject that the learners have may greatly influence the results they obtain. The knowledge of how students perceive the subject may therefore be an invaluable source of information facilitating teacher's understanding of different forms of students' behaviour in the classroom by casting some light on the reasons for fast or slow progress in learning a subject.

Janowski (1985:121) lists different questions that teachers should know the answers to in order to get a holistic picture of who the students are and what attitudes to school, the subject and the teacher they have. He explains that when using questionnaires, or other forms of data collection, a teacher may gather information concerning, for example students' attitudes to school, to the teacher, to the subject. Also, s/he may learn the students' evaluation of the teacher's work (teacher's skills, body language, teacher-learner interaction, etc.) and also the students' social background, interests and plans for the future.

It is necessary that teachers themselves try to diagnose their students' attitude to the subject in order to understand their behaviour in the classroom. Janowski (*ibid.)* indicates that there are many different factors which influence students' attitude to the foreign language such as their interest in the subject, possessing abilities which facilitate learning the subject (e.g. some students find it easy to learn by heart which is a great help in learning a foreign language), their attitudes to the teacher and the way they evaluate his/her work, or conviction that the knowledge acquired will be useful for their future lives.

If the teacher is aware of his/her students' attitudes to the subject, it is easier for him/her to understand the reasons for their behaviour in the classroom, and also lack of motivation and progress in the case of some of them.

Student attitudes to the teacher

Whether learners are successful in learning a subject or not depends not only on their attitude to the subject. What they think of a teacher is important for their foreign language progress as

well. If students do not have a good rapport with the teacher, they are not very willing to come and participate in lessons. Even if their motivation to learn a foreign language is high at the beginning of the school year, any negative emotions, e.g. hostility, between the teacher and the students may result in lowering their interest in learning.

What a positive rapport between the teacher and students results in is mutual trust, which may be used to improve the effectiveness of teaching. A teacher who knows and likes his/her students works harder to achieve pedagogical success and therefore wants his/her students to inform him/her of what can be done to help them make progress. Such a teacher is eager to know what their students' attitudes to him/her as a person, to his/her behaviour (verbal and non-verbal) and the way s/he teaches are. The fact that students like their teacher enables the latter to collect both positive and negative evaluative comments from the learners. What is more, according to what Ratajek (1982:104) claims, teachers' openness to get to know what their students think of them and of the way they teach, leads to deepening students' trust and respect to those teachers who show that they care about students and their progress.

A good rapport between teachers and learners means mutual friendliness, desire to co-operate, meet, talk and do things together. To have a good rapport with learners a teacher needs to try hard to learn not only what students think of him/her, but also who they are and what their expectations concerning the person of the teacher are. On the basis of his research concerning opinions that students of different age groups have of their teachers Stefanović (1976) came to the conclusion that almost everything which is connected with the teacher's personality and his/her personal activity in and outside school is interesting and attractive to students. They observe their teacher's behaviour carefully and frequently know much more about their teachers' lives than the latter think. What is more, any new information that students learn about their teacher becomes a stimulus for them for positive or negative reactions which influence their opinion about the teacher, but also, more generally, about school, work, learning and other aspects of life. Stefanović's research shows that the attitude that young learners have towards their teachers is generally only positive, as in most cases children do not have any negative connotations or experiences concerning school and teachers. They are therefore less critical than older learners. What is more, children's perception of a teacher in the first few years of school education is that this is the person who, in the same way as their parents, wants to take care of them and give them a helping hand in their exploration of the world around. As they get older they become more and more critical in their evaluation of both teachers and school as an institution.

Students form their opinions about teachers not only on the basis of direct contacts with them, but also following the views their parents and the local community hold. This means that any comment concerning a teacher which is formulated by a parent – an authority for a child, in most cases finds its reflection in the young person's attitude to the particular teacher as students frequently blindly adjust their own views to those represented by their parents.

The attitude to the teacher that students have may not only be the result of influences that relatives have on students' views about teachers and school or even the feelings and emotions that both parties of the classroom interaction evoke in each other, but as Richards and Lockhart (1992) claim, it is also influenced by the students' beliefs about teachers and the teaching-learning process. Learners form their own beliefs concerning both effective and ineffective teachers on the basis of experiences gained from the contacts with different teachers and different teaching styles that those teachers represented.

5. Teacher – learner interaction in the classroom

5.1 Humanistic psychology and teacher-learner relationships in the classroom

As already mentioned, it is the teacher's job to create an environment which is conducive to learning. Teachers may do this effectively only if they are aware of the importance of the students' feelings, emotions and thoughts. However, this affective aspect of the teaching-learning process is often undervalued and neglected which, in consequence, leads to a poor teacher-learner rapport. To teach effectively teachers need to understand that education does not involve merely imparting knowledge but that the aim of education is the facilitation of change in the learner. It means that what a FL teacher should foster in the classroom is 'the development of individual's self-concept and of his or her personal sense of reality' (Brown, 1987) in order to make the learner learn the language and realise his/her potential.

To be able to create a non-threatening environment in which a learner may become a 'fully functioning person' (Rogers, 1951), open to experience and willing to learn the teacher needs to be aware of the needs of the learner to create opportunities for meeting them effectively for the benefit of the learner's development as a FL user and also as a person.

5.2 Maslow's hierarchy of human needs

Maslow (1970) claims that human behaviour, and therefore also learners' behaviour, depends on meeting certain needs necessary for personal growth which are hierarchical in nature(Fig. 4).

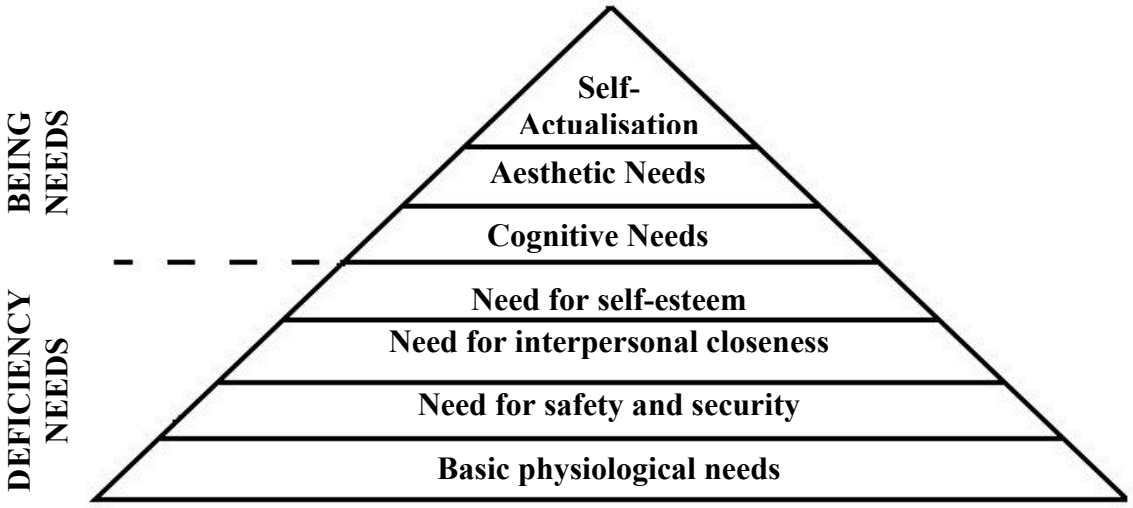

Fig 4 Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1970: 76)

The first category called 'deficiency needs' includes basic physiological needs such as water, food, sleep and also psychological needs for belonging, security, safety and self-esteem. In his theory Maslow advocates that meeting these basic needs is a requirement for the needs further up the hierarchy to be fulfilled. He expresses the opinion that one cannot give full attention to, for example, aesthetic needs if s/he is hungry and feels insecure.

'Being needs', relate to the fulfilment of an individual's potential and they are placed at the top of Maslow's pyramid. Their position is explained by the fact that not many people realise their full potential and achieve self-actualisation, because their lower needs are not fully satisfied. Maslow also stresses the need for an 'appropriate' environment which enables an individual to express him/herself.

Maslow's ideas of the hierarchy of human needs should be taken into consideration by teachers who are looking for reasons for their learners' misbehaviour or poor learning outcomes. The answer to the problems may be the fact that some of the students' maintenance needs, for example the need to get enough sleep or enough attention from others, are not met.

What may also constitute a valuable contribution to ensuring effective classroom interaction is the emphasis that Maslow puts on meeting the affective needs of people. In the classroom context this means the necessity for the teacher to create an emotionallly secure environment for learners. Such an environment would give students a sense of belonging to the peer group and enable them to be self-respected individuals by receiving positive feedback from others. Maslow also stresses that the most important function of education is to create possibilities for an individual to develop and achieve self-actualisation. Thus, he calls for giving learners challenging classroom tasks to stimulate their curiosity, to encourage them to think and this way to realise their potential as learners and people. (Williams, Burden, 1997:33-35).

5.3 Erik Erikson's stages of psychological development

In his book *Childhood and Society,* Erikson (1963) claims that psychological development depends on the way an individual passes through eight stages from birth to old age. He stresses that each stage poses some kind of a challenge, or a crisis for a person and that a 'smooth pass' from one stage to the other depends on the way s/he handles the challenge by getting support from other significant people in his/her life. (Table 4)

Stage in life	Challenge	Crisis (when challenge inadequately dealt with)
Early infancy	Learning to trust	A sense of mistrust
2-3 years old	Establishing autonomy	Feeling of doubt
4 years old	Developing the sense of initiative	Feeling of guilt
Early school years	Establishing a sense of industry	A sense of inferiority
Adolescence	Search for identity	Feeling of confusion, aimlessness, anti-social behaviour
Young adult	Attaining intimacy	Feeling of inadequacy
Middle – age	Maintaining a sense of generavity	A sense of stagnation

Table 4 Erik Erikson's stages of development (adapted from Williams and Burden, 1997:146)

As can be seen (Table 4), the first challenge in the person's life is to learn how to trust others and oneself. Whether one will be able to do so or not depends on how the child's

parents perceive the world around them, i.e. whether they consider it to be a predictable place to be or not, as their perception is installed into their children's minds.

The next step, which takes place at the age of approximately two or three, is that of developing autonomy which is perceived to be the key stage in establishing a young person's feeling of self-competence. Lack of parental encouragement to explore the world at this stage leads to a child's feeling doubt about his/her own abilities which make it more difficult for him/her to deal with subsequent stages.

The stage of developing autonomy is followed by one of taking initiative in learning the 'new'. Lack of caretaker's support at this stage leads to the generation of a feeling of guilt which inhibits initiative taking in the future. When young learners go to school they are likely to develop either a sense of industry, or inferiority, depending on whether their educators put an emphasis on co-operative, or competitive learning. Competitive learning, in the case of youngsters, is likely to generate a feeling of inferiority, resulting from the fact that they are constantly being compared to someone else.

Erikson advocates the key challenge of the next stage to be the search for identity and calls teachers to help their students establish a strong sense of personal identity by giving young people opportunities to make their own decisions and to express themselves in constructive ways.

A smooth 'pass' through all the earlier stages guarantees successful accomplishment of the next – that of attaining intimacy. However, unresolved crises from any of the previous stages are likely to create problems with establishing intimate relationships and lead therefore to feelings of alienation, confusion and aimlessness which find their reflection in the disruptive behaviour of some learners.

The challenge of the last stage is maintaining a sense of generavity – the perception according to which one is continuously able to generate new things which can be of some value to others. Whether, in middle or old age, a person has a sense of internal integrity and self-content being the result of the belief that one can still be of some help to others, or on the contrary, that of despair resulting from a conviction about missed life opportunities and life stagnation, depends to the great extent on the development of creativity during the years of school education. That is why Erikson stresses the need to use music, art, games and drama in (foreign language) teaching.

Williams and Burden (1997:31-33) indicate that knowledge of Erikson's theory of stages of human development is very important for (FL) teachers as it makes them aware of three important facts. Firstly, that the learning process is lifelong. Secondly, that the particular

kind of help and support that some learners require depends on their age and finally, that the 'quality' of teacher's help in resolving different life tasks will have a great influence on how successfully the learners will deal with subsequent tasks in the future

5.4 Carl Rogers's view of the successful teaching-learning process

Carl Rogers, another representative of the humanistic school of psychology, provides the following definition of an educated individual:

> *The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realised that no knowledge is secure; that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security.* (1994:104)

He stresses that the task of educators is to teach learners how to be open to experience and seek knowledge on their own in order to become fully autonomous learners. However, he suggests that learning may only bring positive results when the learners see the subject matter as relevant to their lives and if they participate actively in the process. Rogers also warns that external criticism, being a threat to the learner's self-image, may bring about resistance to learning. Therefore, he calls for self-evaluation to be encouraged and for the creation of an atmosphere of 'unconditional positive regard' (Williams and Burden, 1997:35). Rogers explains that it can only be established when teacher-learner relationship in the classroom is based on trust and such a relationship is possible to create when a teacher has a lot of empathy for his/her learners (and the learners have empathy for one another as well). Empathy in the classroom context means that the teacher tries to get to know the students as individuals (personalisation) and seeks to meet their needs (Williams and Burden, 1997:36).

Rogers' 'humanistic psychology' has a significant impact on the present understanding of the learning process. Rogers claims that human beings have the ability to grow in a direction which enhances their existence, and therefore in a non-threatening environment people grow and learn better and faster. According to Rogers, in order to create an environment which facilitates learning and self-development, the teacher needs to establish an interpersonal relationship with his/her learners. To do this, s/he needs to resign from his/her superior position in the learning process and try to gain students' trust and acceptance.

S/he may only do it if s/he communicates with the students openly and lets them do the same. In his focus on the affective rather than the cognitive side of the teaching-learning process, Rogers is convinced that if the 'context' for learning is properly created, human beings will learn everything they need (Brown, 1987:71).

Humanistic psychology provides a language teacher with the knowledge necessary to be taken into consideration when creating a positive learning environment by means of establishing good teacher-learner relationships. In order to have a good rapport with students, teachers are recommended to:

- Create a sense of belonging;
- Make the subject relevant to the learner;
- Involve the whole person;
- Encourage a knowledge of self;
- Develop personal identity;
- Encourage self-esteem;
- Involve the feelings and emotions;
- Minimise criticism;
- Encourage creativity;
- Develop a knowledge of the process of learning;
- Encourage self-initiation;
- Allow for choice;
- Encourage self-evaluation.

(Williams and Burden,1997)

The whole person involvement advocated by the humanistic approach to learning has a powerful influence on the teaching-learning process and therefore deserves close attention of teachers a it not only contributes to the development of language skills of the learner but also his/her potential as a person.

5.5 Individual student profiles and language group profiles

Before the first lesson with a new class the teacher feels anxious due to the fact that s/he knows nothing about the people s/he is going to work with. Students who are in the same situation have the obvious advantage that they are not 'alone' in the classroom - they are among peers who, consciously or not, give them emotional support and a certain sense of security. Another advantage that students have is that they frequently manage to gather some

basic information about the teacher from other students whom s/he has already taught. The teacher knows nothing about the group of students sitting in front of him/her - neither who they are nor what their attitude to school, teachers and his/her subject are.

The teacher's feeling of insecurity is created by the fact that s/he has to work in a totally new environment. This feeling decreases as the teacher gets some information about the class and individual learners – starting from their names and surnames. Gathering information about learners is inscribed in the pedagogical role of teachers. Teachers must know the people they teach if they want to influence them. Janowski (1985:8) stresses that it is worth collecting information about the learners as it it enables diagnosis of the phenomena the teacher notices to be developing in language groups (whether positive or negative), which greatly facilitates his/her work (it is easier to prepare lessons which students find interesting if the teacher knows what students' interests are) and it provides information about the conditions of work in the class (e.g. about possible discipline problems).

Janowski (*ibid.*) stresses that there are many types of information the teacher may want to collect. For example, teacher research may be devoted to gathering information about 'the class as the whole and the internal processes taking place in it, individual learners and their self-evaluation, aspirations and the hierarchy of values, or students' attitudes to certain school subjects, or to school and its requirements'.

Whether the process of collecting information about the students will be successful or not depends on the quality of classroom interaction. If students do not like the teacher, they may not want to share information about themselves. According to Janowski (1985) other conditions that must be met to ensure the teacher's success are:

- 'sincerity in contacts with learners – students must feel that the teacher appreciates their opinions and tries to understand them,
- awareness of students' perception of school and teachers- the teacher must be aware that different learners perceive him/her as more or less distant to them and s/he should try to reduce this distance for the benefit of better mutual contacts,
- ability to look at different learners from their own perspective- not necessarily to share their opinions but rather to understand their way of thinking,
- effective flow of information - teachers should listen more than speak in the classroom and let their students express opinions and ask questions,
- understanding of non- verbal signals sent by the students,

- learner trust – students trust those teachers who are loyal to them and who show interest in them,
- empathy- a teacher will never fully know the learners if s/he is not able to understand and/or accept students' feelings.'

There are many different ways of collecting information about the learners – from classroom observation through questionnaires and interviews to sociometric research and it is only the teacher's own decision whether s/he decides to make use of any of these or not.

To ensure successful language learning teachers should firstly collect information concerning learners' self-evaluation, aspirations and hierarchy of values and students' attitudes to school and a foreign language. This information will provide them with knowledge concerning learners' opinions about the usefulness of the foreign language in their future life plans, feelings the learners experience learning the language, e.g. satisfaction, boredom, etc., students' perceptions of their own abilities to learn a language, and the degree of students' interest in learning the language and in getting to know the new culture.

Learners' feedback to the teacher's work is extremely valuable as it provides teachers with information about what students like and dislike about their work, what they would like to see changed, or what new things they would like to be introduced.

6. The social dimension of teaching and learning

6.1 The nature of roles

Each individual is a part of the society s/he exists in and through his/her life the person plays different roles in the society. Some of the roles may be chosen, e.g. the role of a teacher, while others are imposed upon us by circumstances, e.g. the role of a school pupil. It is not difficult to predict that if a person is not prepared to take the role, or does not know how to behave in it, s/he may act contrary to people's expectations. This, according to Wright (1987:9) 'can lead to poor relations with others, ineffectiveness in the task-oriented aspects of the role, or just plain unhappiness on the part of the individual.'

The process of learning a language in the classroom depends to a great extent on the person of the teacher (Wright, 1987: ix) but even more on the teacher-learner rapport, which is shaped also by the roles that teachers and learners take in the classroom. According to Ellis and McClintock (1990) a role in the teaching-learning context may be defined as the part taken by each participant in the act of communication which takes place in the classroom.

6.2 Factors influencing teacher and learner roles

Classroom language learning is a process in which a teacher shares his/her knowledge of a language with a group of learners. The way teachers and learners perform and interpret their roles will have a significant influence on the nature of the process. It must be remembered that teaching and learning are long-term processes and that group structure is dynamic and therefore involves constant change of roles.

The role a teacher takes in the classroom depends on what s/he wants to achieve or intends his/her students to achieve. Harmer (2001) indicates that a teacher may play in the classroom the roles of:

- a resource, being a helping and easily available information giver,
- an organiser, offering students feedback and correction,
- an observer, monitoring students' performance to be able to give them both group and individual feedback,
- a controller, being in charge of the class and of the activity taking place in the FL classroom,
- a prompter, helping students to carry out different language tasks and solve language problems,
- a tutor, building more intimate relationships with students to give them support and enhance classroom atmosphere,
- a participant, enlivening classroom interaction and reducing the distance between him/herself and learners by own participation in the lesson,

It is the teacher's task to decide which role to play and how to play it with various types of language activities and with different students. What teachers must be able to do, however, is to switch smoothly between roles depending on the needs of students and the lesson (Harmer, 2001).

The choice of roles that teachers and learners will adopt at different stages of the teaching-learning process will depend on a number of factors, among which those presented and commented upon below constitute the most important:

1. **Social status** – in different societies the role of teachers and learners are perceived as having either high or low status. Status depends on the amount of esteem and approval we get from our social group and the society we belong to. Studies on status, e.g. those

carried out by Konarzewski (1995) indicate that it depends on many different factors such as wealth or intelligence, but also on what people think and feel about an individual's performance of his/her role in the family, job, society, etc.

2. **Attitudes and beliefs** – both our attitudes towards others, and the beliefs we hold about different aspects of reality, influence our role behaviour and expectations regarding the behaviour of others. Teachers and learners also have their own beliefs and attitudes concerning each other, the foreign language and the teaching-learning process, which directly and indirectly influence their relations.
3. **Personality** – this undeniably influences people's behaviour. There are different theories whether an individual's personality undergoes some changes or not depending on the role currently played. In spite of different beliefs concerning the nature of personality it is possible to distinguish several personality types. However, as Wright (1987:26) indicates, these types are only tendencies, not absolute cut-and-dried descriptions. It is commonly known that the teacher's personality affects the roles s/he takes in the classroom. It needs to be remembered that although teachers may represent any of the existing types of personality in the classroom, the choice of roles is not only the result of teacher's personality, but also of other factors such as the lesson objectives, the learners, or the institution the teacher works for.
4. **Motivation** – an individual's motivation influences the perception of the role s/he has to take. It is assumed that if one chooses the role oneself, it is likely that s/he will feel good in it and act willingly to fulfil it. However, if the role is in any way imposed, a person may be reluctant to act according to expectations connected with the role. Several factors influencing motivation come into play here. They are the individual's beliefs and attitudes, personality and personal needs.

It needs to be stressed again that high motivation of language learners will lead to a strong desire to co-operate with the teacher and peers to learn the language for future benefits. Teachers should therefore remember that they play in the classroom a crucial role of motivators encouraging learners to work.

6.3 The teacher as a mediator in the language classroom

When we consider the social nature of language we need to look at the process of learning it from the social interactionist's perspective. Williams and Burden (1997:39) write:

> For social interactionists, children are born into a social world, and learning occurs through interaction with other people. From the time we are born we interact with others in our day-to-day lives, and through these interactions we make our own sense of the world.

Thus, to learn a language means to use it for meaningful interaction with others. In his works, the Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, stresses that the significant people in the learner's life play an extremely important role in the process of learning, as they enhance it by selecting and shaping the learning experiences presented to the learner in the process of interaction. He calls these people 'mediators' who are responsible for helping those who have less knowledge to learn and understand the world. In the language classroom it is usually the teacher, sometimes the peer, who takes this role. The key to effective learning is therefore claimed to be effective interaction between the mediator and his/her partner (Williams and Burden, 1997:40).

Like Vygotsky, the Israeli psychologist and educator, Reuven Feuerstein (1991) stressed the importance of the role of mediator in effective learning. He points out that the teacher-mediator's role in the teaching-learning process is to select, organise and present stimuli to learners in a way which is most suitable to promote learning, in order to prepare learners to learn independently and co-operatively. He claims that both cognitive, social as well as emotional development are inextricably linked and therefore the creation of an appropriate classroom environment, which may foster or hinder learning, is as important as the content of what is taught. Thus, he stresses that the role of the teacher-mediator is to empower learners to progress, to learn more, to solve problems and finally to become autonomous by helping them to acquire knowledge in the process of interaction with the teacher, in which the learner is an active participant.

In his theory Feuerstein puts emphasis on, as he calls it, the principle of 'reciprocity' which he thinks to be frequently lacking in the classroom. The principle means the student's willingness to comply with the teacher-mediator's intentions, either at the level of immediate acceptance of his/her ideas, or at the level of agreements reached in the process of negotiation.

Feuerstein, one of the key figures in the social interactionist movement, believes that if appropriate learning conditions are created, anyone can become a fully effective learner. He introduces the notion of 'structural cognitive modifiability', claiming that although it is impossible to achieve the full extent of one's learning potential, everyone is able to develop his/her cognitive capacity all life long. He therefore perceives that the role of the teacher-mediator is to find ways of helping students to develop, i.e. to move through layers of

knowledge and understanding. Feuerstein believes that a teacher-mediator is not a knowledge-giver but rather a warm human being, a fellow explorer who perceives him/herself to be 'at the same level' as the learner and who concentrates on understanding the learner and helping the person to understand how s/he is using his/her brain to solve different problems. Thus, to help the learner in developing his/her cognitive functions which lead to clearer thinking and improved learning processes a teacher needs to build with the learner a relationship based on trust and understanding (Feuerstein, 1991).

As was already stressed earlier, successful learning requires creating a positive environment in which learners feel secure and where, at the same time, they get from their teachers help and encouragement to achieve their potential. Thus, teachers are required to take among many different roles played in the classroom also that of a mediator who will contribute to learners' successful communication with the teacher and the world outside school and lead to their positive learning outcomes.

6.4 Teacher authority

The idea that teachers have to use power in the classroom in order to control students' behaviour is strongly connected with the way children are brought up in families. In the effort-demanding process of bringing up children most fathers and mothers make use of their power on a regular basis and find it natural to let teachers use it, too. They even give teachers the right to act *in loco parentis,* as they understand that whoever participates in the process of bringing up children needs the 'power' to do so. Not many parents and teachers, however, are aware of how much the use of power interferes with the process of learning and teaching and how it weakens mutual relationships.

In English, the word 'authority' has two meanings: it signifies the power one has because of the official position s/he occupies, hence, educational authorities, and a person who gained the respect of others as the one who has true or supposed skills, knowledge and experience. In the children's opinion almost every adult is an authority. Being older, s/he seems to the child to be wiser and more experienced. As children grow up, they discover that adults make mistakes, that there are many things they do not know and that they sometimes fail, too. Gordon (1998) states that this discovery is often disappointing for children. He therefore advises teachers not to encourage students to overestimate the teacher's skills, knowledge, etc. as the situation may result in students' feeling that they have been cheated by the teacher whom they perceive to know all. Authority based upon 'real' skills and knowledge

that the teacher possesses does not change over time, contrary to that based on an 'imaginary' image of who the teacher is.

The other meaning of authority, i.e. the power that teachers use in their contacts with students in the classroom, needs a closer look, too. Power has always been inscribed in the profession of teaching as the teacher is the one who punishes and rewards students. The latter, on the other hand, have no other choice but to depend on the teacher's opinions, moods, likes and dislikes.

As students grow up and become more mature, their attitude to the punishment system changes: they are no longer afraid of punishment from the teacher and the rewards are not so enjoyable, either. This is the time when teachers lose their power and if the teacher-learner relationship in the classroom was not built upon mutual respect, students may cause a lot of discipline problems. Many parents and teachers call this period of time 'the youth rebellion' as many young people do not want to be controlled and directed by adults any more.

Forcing students to be obedient, whether at home or in the classroom, using a reward-punishment system, is the source of many negative and destructive feelings which, in consequence, give rise to some defensive mechanisms that students create. Gordon (1998:214) gives the following list of students' negative feelings resulting from the overuse of the teacher's authority and the accompanying defensive mechanisms tha students create to protect their 'ego'(Table 5).

Negative feelings	**Students' defence mechanisms**
1. Anger	Resistance, rebellion
2. Frustration	Desire for revenge
3. Hatred	Telling lies, hiding feelings
4. Embarrassment	Accusing others
5. The feeling of being useless	Cheating in tests, copying other students' work
6. Fear, anxiousness	Imposing one's will, assaulting others
7. Sadness, depression	Desire to win, not accepting the loss
8. Competition	Conformism, not taking any risk without being sure of success
9. Humiliation	Withdrawal (missing classes, daydreaming, playing truant, depression)

Table 5 Students' reaction to the negative feelings induced by contacts with teachers (adapted from Gordon, 1998: 214)

If teachers want to ensure successful classroom interaction, they need to be aware of the consequences of use of power in the classroom and they need to self-observe and reflect upon their own behaviour to see what form of power they tend to use, or overuse.

Conviction of the need to use power in the classroom often belongs to the set of beliefs that some teachers have about the teaching profession. Those teachers justify the need to exercise authority over students claiming that:

- they are wiser, better educated and have more experience than students,
- students want to be controlled, as without supervision they feel uneasy and even lost,
- there are some students who may only be controlled by means of power, as they are aggressive rebels who want to impose their own will on teachers and to do what they want.

Gordon (*ibid*.) shows that effective teaching is only possible when teachers and learners are able to solve conflicts constructively, without exercising power, so that the needs of both sides are met which allows students' potential to be realised. Gordon presents six steps that must be followed to solve classroom conflicts:

1. Defining the problem
2. Looking for possible solutions
3. Evaluating the solutions
4. Choosing the best solution
5. Implementing the solution
6. Evaluating the implications of the solution.

Gordon (*ibid.)* also stresses that the advantages of this step-method in teacher-learner interaction are numerous. Firstly, the relationship between teachers and learners is strengthened because neither side of the conflict feels lost as they co-operate in defining the problem and look for its possible solution. Secondly, students feel more motivated to implement the chosen solution in their lives and more responsible for their behaviour when teachers let them participate in the decision-making process concerning conflict reduction. What is more, the step method allows for the development of creative thinking and therefore enriches both teachers' and learner' classroom and life experience. Teacher-learner co-operation always gives more satisfying results to both sides of conflict than when the teacher imposes his/her solutions on students. Also, the method eliminates the need for the use of power in the classroom and leads to strengthening of mutual trust and respect between teachers and learners. When teachers invite students to participate in the conflict solving process, students do not feel the need to protect themselves against the teacher's power and

therefore do not have to create any defensive mechanisms, e.g. aggression, lying, bullying, fighting, cheating, etc., which are so destructive for teacher-learner interaction in the classroom.

When teachers start sharing responsibility for the atmosphere in the classroom with their students and stop using power to manipulate them, the quality of mutual contacts will improve, as students will feel that what they think and do counts to teacher, who tries to understand them rather than only accuse and punish.

6.5 Teacher authority and learner autonomy

According to the traditionally ascribed roles, a language teacher is a person who organises and manages the teaching-learning process and who is responsible for creating positive relations. Recently, in all spheres of life - political, social and even in families, we may observe a common lack of authority figures. The same may be noticed in the classroom (educational) context. Many young people do not respect their teachers. However, this is not because the teacher 'seeks to maintain the power of privilege, schooling the pupil into obedient compliance' as Widdowson (1990:186) puts it, but rather because teachers do not have good rapport with their learners. Fontana (1981) states that those teachers who claim a superior position by virtue of the social role ascribed to them and who therefore often find it difficult to communicate successfully with their students do not gain their respect and in many cases only provoke students to behave badly in the classroom just to reduce the discomfort they feel being treated as those who have much lower status than the teacher.

Nowadays, for a teacher to be perceived as an authority by the learners means that s/he has to 'maintain a non-authoritarian presence' (Widdowson,1990:188) in order to make learners feel that they learn not because their teacher tells them to do so, but because they need to accomplish their own goals with the teacher's help. Teachers need to stop being overt in imposing their expertise. They still have to do so, as it is their role, but they must do it with more subtlety and discretion than before. In the present-day classroom it is expected that the teacher will give his/her students more freedom to make their own decisions, and therefore to become autonomous language learners. That is why teachers should never stop in their endeavours to establish authority, but at the same time they are advised to increase teacher-learner activity and collaborative work to let the learners develop, because as Widdowson (1990:189) puts it, 'the learner really only exercises autonomy within the limits set by teacher authority'.

7. Evaluation of teacher work

7.1 Forms of evaluation

When pre-service trainees become in-service teachers, their professional development rests only in their own hands. They get regular help neither during the lessons conducted nor in any activity directed at learners outside school (Janowski, 1985:69). However, if teachers want to develop as professionals, they need to have a basis for professional self-improvement. Evaluation of the teachers' work provides them with such a basis, as it makes them aware of areas of competence and incompetence in their teaching. Teachers may get feedback concerning their work from two kinds of sources:

- external: from an expert, school authorities (e.g. from a school head during a classroom observation visit) and his/her learners
- internal: self-reflection.

7.2 External sources of teacher evaluation

As was stated earlier, getting information concerning one's teaching is a prerequisite for development of professional competence. Although teacher's own evaluation is undoubtedly the most prolific source of information, one cannot forget the help obtained from external assessors, which may provide teachers with additional and also valuable information helping them become more successful professionals**.**

Classroom observation visits

A lesson observation visit is the most commonly used form of control of teachers' work and it plays a very important role in the process of motivating teachers to improve as professionals by means of sharing observations and giving suggestions concerning how to make teaching more effective. Until recently a foreign lesson observation visit was carried out mostly by either the school heads, or experts from outside school. Because language barrier was a problem, nowadays there is a tendency that the observer is another language teacher who understands the language of classroom interaction and is therefore able to evaluate not only what a teacher does (or does not do) in the classroom, but who may also correct the teacher's language performance.

Apart from its advantages, a classroom observation visit has also some disadvantages. One of them is the fact that in most cases teachers know in advance about the date of a 'planned visit' and therefore their classes are always carefully 'arranged'. What is more, neither the teacher nor the learners feel or behave naturally if they know that they are being closely watched.

Although teachers' work should be regularly supervised to ensure high standard of teaching, it may be hypothetised that there are teachers whose work is assessed by some external observer only infrequently and irregularly. It seems to be remembered, however, that if teachers are not highly motivated to self-reflect and to develop professionally, they may not get enough feedback necessary to sustain a high level of motivation and interest in improving their teaching. On the other hand, not only frequency but also the way the observation visit is carried out by the observer is of great importance as well. A successful observation needs to be carefully planned - a teacher should be informed about the time and date of the visit to be able to prepare, also mentally, for the meeting to avoid unnecessary stress resulting from being visited unexpectedly. The lesson should be preceded by a pre-observation talk in which the teacher will inform the observer of the lesson's objectives, methods and materials to be used so that the observer can follow the stages of the lesson as it progresses. After the lesson the teacher should be given an objective and descriptive assessment of his/her work together with some guidelines on how to improve teaching. Badly organised observation, together with subjective and unfair evaluation, may discourage the teacher from doing his/her best when teaching.

It needs to be remembered that teachers' work should be evaluated regularly to help teachers develop as professionals, taking into consideration the fact that no matter what experience a particular teacher has, there is always room for professional improvement. A good solution for teachers is to 'co-operate' with learners who can evaluate the teacher's performance more effectively than a person 'from outside' as they participate in the classes carried out by the teacher two, three or even four times a week as is the case with foreign language lessons.

Peer coaching

One of the forms of classroom observation visit which is gaining popularity nowadays is peer coaching. Richards and Farrell (2005:143) define this form of teacher evaluation in the following way:

> Peer coaching is a procedure in which two teachers collaborate to help one or both teachers improve some aspects of their teaching. The situation requires adopting the role of a coach-giver of constructive feedback by one of the teachers while the other conducts the lesson.

Peer coaching may take many different forms (James, 2001):

- an informal post-lesson chat between a teacher and his/her mentor
- collaboration between teachers on the preparation of lesson plan or teaching materials
- mutual lesson observations
- tandem teaching (co-teaching) of a lesson and observing each other's style
- videotaping some lessons followed by viewing and discussing them with the coach.

Peer coaching is an effective way for both professional development and objective lesson evaluation. The teacher is given suggestions and observations from the person s/he knows and trusts and has freedom to choose whether to change anything in his/her teaching behaviour as a result of the peer-coaching suggestions or not.

James (*ibid.*) stresses that for peer-coaching to be successful, both teachers participating in it have to understand the nature of roles they are supposed to play. He repeats after Gottesmann (1994) that the coach should take a "No Praise, No Blame" attitude towards the teacher s/he is coaching. His/her role is that of a 'critical friend', rather than a consultant and the word 'critical' has positive connotations here and means being objective in sharing observation and giving judgements or suggestions. What is more, the coach must be an attentive listener, not imposing his/her own solutions to problems but eager to help the peer teacher find his/her own ways to deal with problematic issues.

Peer coaching may only bring positive results if the collaborating teacher is willing to improve his/her teaching and remains open-minded to suggestions of the coach. The teacher, therefore, needs to understand the nature of peer-coaching as a way of analysing and improving instruction and not as a means to be criticised.

Student evaluation of teacher's work

Finding out what learners themselves think about many different aspects of the teaching-learning process taking place in the language classroom may become an invaluable source of information for teachers. The judgemental comments of peers or the supervisor provide the teacher with opinions of a pedagogical character. However, peer 'visits' to lessons are rather infrequent and therefore their view of the classroom atmosphere, or the teacher's work, do not

always have solid grounds. They are based solely on the impression the peer had after observing one chosen lesson. Learners' judgements may be more objective, as the learners participate in every lesson conducted by the teacher and therefore usually know him/her better.

Although many teachers support the view that a learner is a partner in the teaching/learning process, they still do not want to give up their role of experts and knowledge givers and they continue to represent the transmission model of teaching. One reason for this situation may be the fact that they are afraid to lose face by asking learners to evaluate their performance. The problem concerns mostly novice and authoritarian-type teachers. The first group does not yet feel secure doing their job and may fear to lose students' respect if they start asking for opinions and assessment. The latter do not, 'by nature', feel the need to consult students in this respect. What is more, teachers are generally used to assessing students, but not to being assessed themselves. Even those enthusiastic teachers who appreciate the role of students' evaluation for their professional development may feel reluctant to consult their learners, as they may be afraid of the pressure other teachers may exert on them for doing something 'new and unusual' which requires not only additional effort on the part of the teacher but also courage to face students' comments and opinions.

Collecting classroom data from the learners may take many different forms. James (2001) mentions the following tools that can be used:

1. administration of a questionnaire – this form of data collection has many advantages: it is easy to administer and follow up, it provides quantifiable data and in a relatively short time teachers gather information from every student in every group they teach in which allows for direct comparison of groups and individuals and gives answers to the teacher's questions. It also gives the teacher a chance to learn things that students would not dare to say as questionnaires are anonymous.
2. an informal chat with the language group or individual learners. James (2001:119) enumerates the following advantages of such a teacher-learner interview:
    - the teacher is in direct contact with the learner,
    - the learner is familiar with the teacher and therefore s/he does not feel stressed to speak his/her mind,
    - the teacher gets the desired information directly from the learners,
    - any problematic questions may be dealt with as soon as they appear.

It must be remembered that such an informal conversation, whether during a lesson time, or after the class, always builds up a close relationship between the teacher and the learners who feel that the teacher really cares about their progress in learning the language and when teaching takes into consideration their individual needs and preferences.

3. asking students to express their opinions or assess a lesson in a written form
4. learning students' opinions on the basis of observations of their classroom behaviour– a good teacher should be a good observer who can quickly read students' feelings from the way they behave during a lesson
5. keeping an audio or video record of a lesson – this form of collecting data enables teachers to focus on any aspect of the lesson they want, which is quite impossible to do while being involved in teaching.

The number of tools for classroom data collection makes it possible for the teacher to find the one which is most in concord with his/her personality and teaching style.

Janowski (1985) indicates that students may become infinite sources of information by providing teachers with evaluation of, for example, their teaching strategies, especially those used to fight disruptive behaviour, but also their engagement in teaching (enthusiasm, motivation) and body language in the classroom.

However, as observed by Komorowska (2001:198), collecting evaluative data from students is still very much undervalued in Poland. Looking for the reasons for teachers' unwillingness to accept feedback from learners it may be hypothetized that not being used to this particular form of assessment, teachers may feel either humiliated asking students to evaluate their work, or afraid of the students' criticism. Some teachers may also be unwilling to learn students' assessment of their classroom performance being convinced that the assessment given cannot be objective as learners are often ignorants of different issues concerning teachers' work.What is more, depending on their beliefs and professional self-esteem there may be teachers who think they will lose their authority if they let students come 'too close'. Also, there may be those who are convinced they can do what they want in the classroom because they are 'in power'.

Because of the negative attitude to this form of work evaluation, teachers very infrequently encourage learners to express their views concerning the quality of their work. Only those teachers who hold the opinion that teaching is a 'service' type of profession are more prone to seek students' satisfaction and are therefore more willing to ask students for opinions about their teaching.

7.3 Teacher self-evaluation

7.3.1 Forms of self-evaluation

Although the supervisor's, or students' opinion about a lesson which has been carried out provides the teacher with certain insight into the perception the observers have about the teacher's performance, it is the teacher him/herself who is able to make the most informative judgements based on the information collected during his/her teaching practice. Teachers may evaluate their own performance by means of self-monitoring (self-observation). Richards and Farrell (2005: 34) state that:

> Self-monitoring or self-observation refers to a systematic approach to the observation, evaluation, and management of one's own behaviour in order to achieve a better understanding and control over the behaviour.

Self-monitoring, as one approach to reflective teaching, is based on the assumption that in order to teach better, a teacher has to become aware of his/her strengths and weaknesses by means of systematic and objective observation of his/her teaching behaviour. To do it, s/he may decide to make use of one of the forms of self-monitoring proposed by Richards and Farrell (2005):

- a lesson report - a record of what actually happened in a lesson carried out as a written narrative account of a lesson, a checklist or a questionnaire. The aim of the lesson report is to document the teacher's observation for future reference,
- an audio-recording of a lesson – the purpose of such an activity is to make teachers aware of certain aspects of teaching which are difficult to reflect upon during the lesson such as: teacher's tone of voice and teacher's talking time, etc.
- a video recording of a lesson – the use of the video camera gives the most complete record of both teacher and learner behaviour during the lesson. However, before videotaping a lesson a number of questions need to be answered, for example, who will do the videotaping, or what the focus of the video will be. A great advantage of a videotape is that it gives the teacher a chance to see how s/he interacts with students and how students interact with one another.

The advantages of implementing self-monitoring in one's teaching are numerous. Firstly, using any of the procedures presented above the teacher gets a tool to discover his/her strengths, as well as weaknesses in his/her teaching which constitutes a good basis for improvement. What is more, the reflections gathered by means of self-monitoring may serve as a help in developing the sense of one's professional competence. Secondly, self-monitoring gives the teacher insight into problem areas s/he was not aware of. Precise identification of a problem gives teachers the opportunity to apply appropriate strategies to address it.

Teachers may be initially unwilling to implement self-monitoring, perceiving it as a strenuous and time consuming way of collecting information about their way of teaching. However, they become much more enthusiastic after experiencing it, as they can see the positive results it brings to their teaching.

7.3.2 Teacher as a reflective practitioner

If a teacher's intention is to ensure successful classroom discourse, s/he needs to focus on building a good rapport with the students which is only possible if the teacher is able to meet the learners' needs concerning teaching. To do this, s/he must firstly study the learner profiles and secondly, learn what his/her strengths and weaknesses as a teacher are, to be able to 'serve' the learner with professional guidance at every stage of learning. Generally, teachers have their own opinion on how 'good' teachers they are. However, not being given the chance to see, hear or reflect upon the lesson carried out, they are not able to notice that there may be a gap between what they think about themselves as professionals and what they actually do in the classroom. They may be not aware that, for example, their explanations are not always clear, that they talk too quickly or simply too much, or that they do not pay attention to some students at all. So, teacher-initiated self-reflection, including all the activities that teachers do to improve teaching, help them 'to move from the level where they are guided largely by impulse, intuition, or routine to the level where actions are guided by reflection and self-awareness'(Richards and Farrell, 2005:37). Ruddock (1984:6) stresses that: 'Not to examine one's practice is irresponsible, to regard teaching as an experiment and to monitor one's performance is a responsible professional act.'

All teachers have their own set of beliefs about teaching (and also their own assumptions and attitudes to it) and it may be expected by both the learners and the lesson observers that in the classroom the teachers will behave according to them. However, the studies of Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978) show that there is often a discrepancy between

teachers' beliefs and the way they teach. If the discrepancy is extensive, learners get confusing messages from their teacher which negatively influence their learning process. To avoid such situations, Schön (1983) encourages teachers to become reflective practitioners, i.e. professionals who subject their work to continuous critical reflection. This can be done by reflecting-in-action and reflecting-on-action by 'constantly generating questions and checking our [i.e. teachers'] emerging theories both with personal past experience and with the reflections of others' (Williams and Burden, 1997: 54). Thus, to be a reflective practitioner means for teachers to raise their awareness concerning both the system of beliefs that they have and the changes within it to be able to state whether their performance reflects those beliefs. However, if the critical reflection is to be successful, teachers need to look both inwards - into their system of beliefs and values and outwards – considering learners' viewpoints and getting feedback from them (Williams and Burden, 1997:56-57).

Wysocka (2003:24-28) stresses that it is necessary for language teacher's professional development to 'consciously and precisely define' what they can do well, what brings good results in teaching and also what type of teacher's activity is doomed to failure and why. Wysocka lists the following types of incompetence resulting from different sources:

- primary incompetence - which results from gaps in education at some stage of teacher's training,
- secondary incompetence - which results from unwillingness to use certain teaching procedures due to their unsuccessful use in the classroom,
- educational incompetence – which refers to unqualified teachers who lack proper formal education to do the job of teaching,
- excessive competence – which refers to teacher's overuse of his/her favourite teaching procedures which leads to routine behaviour and limits any kind of creative activity on the part of the teacher.

It seems that identification of the type of incompetence is the first step which leads to finding the reasons for this incompetence and finally to making an attempt to eliminate it.

Wysocka (*ibid*.) also states that defining areas of teacher competence and incompetence constitutes a good basis for monitoring the teacher's professional development. It turns out that only regular and conscious self-reflection upon the way of teaching may bring about a change in the teacher's attitude to it, transforming him/her into a more competent professional.

7.3.3 Teaching portfolio

One of the forms of professional self-monitoring which teachers may use is creating a teaching portfolio. The analysis of the material collected in it may help teachers to realisewhat strengths and weaknesses they have as professionals and to make them more aware of what their beliefs about and attitudes to teaching, themselves and learners are. What is more, a portfolio presents evidence of the teacher's thinking, creativity and effectiveness which s/he may reflect upon in his/her attempt to develop professionally.

Richards and Farrell (2005) describe a teaching portfolio as consisting of 'a set of documents and artefacts carefully selected and organized to show different aspects of the teacher's work'. Explaining the nature of teaching portfolios Richards and Farrel (*ibid.)* state that:

> A professional portfolio is an evolving collection of carefully selected or composed professional thoughts, goals and experiences that are threaded with reflection and self-assessment. It represents who you are, what you do, why you do it, where you have been, where you are, where you want to go, and how you plan on getting there.

A portfolio can be used either for self-appraisal or self-assessment or both. It provides evidence of the standard of the teacher's work, his/her creativity and resourcefulness. It is also a source of information for review and reflection which equips the teacher with knowledge of his/her strengths and weaknesses, and is, therefore, a useful tool for identifying areas for future development and improvement.

One more advantage of keeping a portfolio is that its contents may be shared with other teachers for mutual benefit in the process of peer coaching, providing teachers not only with interesting teaching hints but also fresh and creative ideas. What is more, a portfolio may also be submitted to supervisors as evidence of the teacher's professional activity.

Richards and Farrell (2005:99) identify two kinds of portfolios, each created for different purposes: a 'working' portfolio and a 'showcase' portfolio. The first contains documents which show the teacher's way of achieving certain teaching goals, as well as other items which provide evidence that the particular goal has been achieved. The other, as its name implies, aims at presenting the range of skills the teacher possesses and may be submitted to managers or prospective employers, as it shows the teacher at his/her best.

Nowadays, teachers are encouraged by the institutions they work in to create their own teaching portfolios, as they allow for holistic assessment of their teaching. They give a teacher a chance to document his/her strengths, skills, accomplishments, but also to see their weaknesses. What is more, the process simply forces those teachers who are lazy and reluctant to do anything to think critically about their teaching behaviour and professional development.

When compiling a portfolio, a teacher has to consider its purpose and the audience it is created for either by him/herself, or with the help of the teacher's professional development supervisor. These two factors will determine the contents of the portfolio and the way it is arranged. James (2001:138) presents the process of portfolio construction as consisting of three stages:

> Stage 1 – Collect: Teachers collect materials throughout a training programme, such as completed worksheets.
> Stage 2 - Review: Teachers review such materials regularly and select important items for inclusion in a portfolio
> Stage 3 – Report: Teachers report to others, for example to another teacher or to a trainer in a tutorial, using the portfolio.

The three-stage process makes it possible for the teacher to notice how s/he has developed as a professional over a period of time which, in a consequence, contributes to the teacher's high self-esteem.

According to the Polish educational system promotion requirements, it is necessary for a teacher to create a portfolio and to submit it to the supervisor's evaluation, which is connected with reaching the next stage of professional promotion. This requirement is believed to greatly contribute to improving the quality of FL teaching, as it forces teachers to take some actions aimed at discovering their own potential and building better relationships with learners for the benefit of teaching and classroom interaction.

Although compiling a portfolio is very beneficial for teachers' development, providing them with the opportunity to assess their teaching holistically, it is also connected with some difficulties that teachers may have to face. Wheeler (1993) reports lack of time to be the most common difficulty. To overcome this, teachers are advised to narrow the content of the portfolio and to set realistic goals as far as timing needed for its preparation is concerned.

James (2001) stresses that deciding on the portfolio's contents may also be problematic for some teachers. In order to create a portfolio best adjusted to the teacher's needs, James

suggests discussing its purpose and contents with either the appraiser in the case of a showcase portfolio, or with a mentor or other teachers in the case of a working portfolio.

8. Final remarks

Foreign language classroom discourse, resulting in teacher-learner interaction, is a very multifaceted phenomenon taking place between the two sides of the teaching-learning process: teachers and learners. It is influenced by many different factors of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic nature. Although many of the factors determining students' success in learning a foreign language are beyond the teacher's control, there is still a lot s/he may do or change – especially within him/herself, to improve the quality of mutual teacher-learner relationships and therefore to facilitate the creation of an environment optimal for foreign language learning. To make foreign language classroom discourse more effective, teachers - as the teaching-learning process organisers and managers, need to be aware of psycho- and sociolinguistic aspects of classroom interaction which come into play when building the rapport with learners. Awareness, however, is the effect of constant flow of information between teachers and learners, teachers' openness to make use of messages sent by students as well as teachers' self-reflection upon the way they teach and interact with the learners.

The project presented in the following chapters of this dissertation has been designed and carried out to explore how different factors of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic nature influence FL classroom discourse and to examine what teachers' awareness of those factors is. Also, the project aimed at encouraging teachers to self-reflect upon their work and classroom behaviour in order to raise their awareness of who they are as professionals as this knowledge is believed to help them become more effective in teaching and in meeting their students' expectations.

Chapter II Research design of the project

1. Research area

Foreign language teachers who want to create the best possible conditions for teaching and learning in the classrooms need to collect data which would make them aware of how different psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors, such as their attitude to teaching and the beliefs they have about a FL, influence the way they teach and also how their teaching is assessed by students and other teachers. Collecting relevant data from sources available such as self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, as well as learner comments, makes it possible for teachers to complement their knowledge of the rules governing classroom discourse (interaction) and the teaching-learning process in general and to introduce necessary changes to those areas of teaching which require improvement. It also gives language teachers a chance to create 'an information bank' including comments, observations and reflections upon teaching, from which they may get guidelines and draw inspiration for further professional development.

Teachers do self-reflect upon their work, but in many cases their observations are not verbalized, written down and later re-thought. They are therefore quickly forgotten and instead of improving the quality of their teaching, teachers make the same mistakes. The aim of this project was among others, to encourage the group of FL teachers involved in it to take some measures aimed at raising their awareness of the way they teach by answering questions concerning different aspects of teaching and their professional lives and drawing their own conclusions which would contribute to making their work more effective.

Gathering and analyzing information concerning evaluation of the teacher's work by himself/herself and others (peers, students, supervisors, local community, etc.) constitute a very important contribution to teacher's professional development. This influences both the quality of teaching and the rapport that the teacher has with learners by making the former aware of the multiplicity of psycho- and sociolinguistic factors influencing teaching/learning process and a teacher-learner rapport in the foreign language classroom.

The idea of students' assessment of teacher's work, which is quite frequent in private language schools where students pay for the teaching services and expect that teachers will do their best to teach them the chosen foreign language, is still very rare in the state run educational system. Language teachers are not very willing to implement assessment of their work by students for many different reasons. The most common of them are:

- the belief that it is a teacher who is the manager of the classroom work and that the students' duty is to follow his/her instructions (a teacher-centred approach),
- the teacher's perception that students are not able to assess their work in a reliable way due to their lack of objectivity and experience in evaluation,
- the teachers' feeling of insecurity connected with the fear of learning what students really think of them and their way of teaching,
- time constraints: lack of time to prepare the scheme for assessment and later to implement students' suggestions into teaching.

The project carried out and analysed in this thesis is to assist teachers in overcoming their reluctance to be assessed by their own students and also to make them aware of all the benefits that their students' evaluation as well as their own self-reflection upon their classroom behaviour brings to the teaching/learning process and the classroom discourse.

This study took a form of an action research project, or to be more precise, the first-diagnostic stage of the project, the aim of which was to help the group of teachers diagnose what they knew about themselves as professionals, learn who their students were and examine how aware the teachers were of their students' assessment of them as language teachers and of their way of teaching with a view to improving the quality of classroom interaction.

1.1 The research aims and objectives

Teaching-learning process which takes place in the classroom is an on-going process aimed at raising students' level of language competence. Thus, the major aim of all foreign language teachers is to help students make progress in learning. Every teacher has his/her own methods, techniques and strategies aimed at effective teaching, which are affected by the teacher's beliefs, as well as his/her own experiences as a language learner. All those teachers who want to be effective in what they do constantly focus on improving their teaching. However, as in probably every other profession, there are also teachers who do not feel any need to put extra effort in making their work more effective. Fortunately, currently teachers are more encouraged to self-reflect upon their work than formerly, as the promotion system introduced in schools imposes on teachers the need to develop professionally. Thus, both those language teachers who claim that they have a vocation to teach and feel a natural need to develop professionally, as well as those who are not really willing to do so, are being encouraged by their supervisors to look critically at what they do in their classrooms. What is more, the

imposed requirement to self-reflect on their way of teaching also involves teachers in taking some action aimed at professional development, e.g. participation in language workshops, or writing teaching materials. Some of the teachers would probably never do this if they were not expected and obliged to.

In order to obtain the most objective evaluation of their teaching, teachers not only reflect upon their work in the process of self-analysis, but they also learn the opinions of their colleagues and their own students. Kwolek (1996) indicates that in the past the most popular form of feedback for language teachers were lesson observations by internal observers, e.g. head teachers, who were not always fair and objective, as frequently they did not know the foreign language being taught. As the two sides participating in the teaching-learning process which takes place in the FL classroom are the teacher and the learners, it is extremely important for the teachers to take into account not only conclusions from self-evaluation but also the comments of students when assessing his/her work

As stated earlier, successful learning and teaching a foreign language are inextricably connected with the teaching environment created in the classroom. The environment is relatively stable and characteristic of the given teacher, as it depends on his/her personality features, the teaching skills the teacher possesses, and foremost on the quality of the rapport s/he has with learners.

This action research project included 30 teachers of English and 781 students who assessed their teachers' work.

The aims of this project were:

1) to make the teachers aware of which sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors influenced the teacher-learner interaction in the classroom most
2) to encourage the teachers to self-reflect upon their own teaching
3) to make the teachers aware of similarities and discrepancies in the assessment of their classroom behaviour by their students and themselves
4) to make the teachers aware of who their students were and what expectations concerning the teacher's behaviour in the classroom.

1.2 The scheme of the study

The research was carried out during three school terms: the spring term of 2004 and both terms of the school year 2005/2006 among teachers of English working in comprehensive

schools and profiled comprehensive schools in the region of Knurów and Gliwice. The research consisted of six stages (Table 6)

Stage of the research	**Aims**
1. Administration of questionnaires to EFL learners	- to obtain students' assessment of the teacher's actions in the classroom with respect to the methods s/he uses to build rapport with students during an English lesson.
2. Administration of questionnaires to EFL teachers	- to encourage teachers to self-reflect upon the way they teach by providing them with questions which facilitate evaluation of different aspects of their work.
3. Analysis of the teachers' and learners' questionnaires	- to find correlations between student and teacher assessment of different aspects of the English teachers' work and behaviour in the classroom
4. Observations of EFL lessons conducted by the teachers	- to verify whether the teachers' self-analysis reflected the classroom reality or not and whether students' evaluation of the teacher's work was objective or rather biased by negative (or positive) feelings that the students had towards the particular teacher
5. Interviews with the EFL teachers	- to inform teachers about students' opinions and observations expressed in their questionnaires - to obtain from teachers some explanation concerning the possible reasons for discrepancies which emerged from comparison of the answers provided by them and their learners in the questionnaires.
6. Analysis of the EFL teacher's diary	- to get an overall picture of who I was as a language teacher, what my attitudes to teaching as well as my strengths and weaknesses as professional were - to check how effective my endeavours to create a learning environment most conducive to learning English were over a given period of time

Table 6 Stages of the action research project

According to the observations of the teachers who were asked to administer the questionnaire to the students, the learners found the idea of evaluating their English teacher's classroom behaviour surprising, but at the same time very challenging. Although the practice of assessing teachers' work by learners is not common in Polish public schools, the subjects

were very open to the idea, claiming that a teacher who cared what they thought of him/her and the work s/he did and was willing to change his/her behaviour to improve mutual teacher-learner rapport deserved their true respect. One student expressed her opinion in the following way:

> I want to take part in the project because I know that my English teacher would like to know my opinion about her. Personally, I admire her for doing whatever she can to teach us effectively and to be our motivator, support and above all a friend.

All the teachers involved in the research claimed that they wanted to develop professionally and personally and therefore they appreciated the opportunity to be engaged in the project. They willingly filled in the questionnaires and actively participated in the interviews during which many of them expressed the conviction that the self-reflection triggered by the project requirements would make them more professionally aware and more effective FL teachers.

2. Subjects of the research

Two groups of subjects were selected to participate in the project –the teachers of English and their learners, teenagers learning the particular foreign language and representing two different types of secondary schools. The reason for the choice of the students representing this particular age group was that teenagers were felt to be able to formulate mature and fairly well-thoughtover opinions and draw conclusions on the basis of the lessons they participated in, or their own learning experiences. Thus, one of the objectives of the project was to provide English teachers who wanted to improve both the classroom discourse and the effectiveness of their teaching with useful and thorough information about those aspects of the teachers' work that the learners paid most attention to when assessing their teachers' classroom behaviour.

As a participant of the project I undertook the task of writing a teacher's diary believing that the process of writing will contribute to my professional development.

2.1 Learners

In order to identify how different psycho- and sociolinguistic factors influence teacher-learner interaction in the FL classroom, 781 learners of English were asked to fill in a questionnaire

including questions concerning their attitude to English as a school subject as well as their assessment of the English teacher's work and behaviour in the classroom in order to collect information about the learners' perceptions of those.

The students involved in the research project were teenagers, aged from sixteen to nineteen, who attended two different types of schools: comprehensive schools and profiled secondary schools. These two types of schools were chosen in order to be able to explore how different psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors shaped classroom discourse in each type of schools and how the specificity of the learning context connected with, for example, the school curriculum or the level of language competence represented by the students, influenced the assessment of their English teachers' work and behaviour in the classroom (Table 7).

Number of teachers	Type of school	Number of students
17	Comprehensive schools	448
13	Profiled comprehensive schools	333

Table 7 Number of subjects per type of school

The comprehensive school learners were generally those who intended to continue their education after graduation and who therefore needed to pass their Matura exam well, which greatly influenced their motivation to learn. What is more, many of them had from three to five lessons of English in a week. Also, many of them were high achievers determined to obtain good results in learning. On the other hand, many of the profiled secondary school students did not have any plans concerning their further education, or even their future lives. Furthermore, being in many cases low achievers in most subjects included in their timetable they were hard to motivate to make any effort to learn the foreign language. They had three lessons of English in a week.

The students participating in the research project represented different levels of language competence (Table 8)

Level of English	Comprehensive school	Profiled secondary school
Beginner/false beginner	59	101
Elementary	127	77
Pre-Intermediate	206	154

Intermediate	57	-

Table 8 Students' level of language competence in English

The level of English competence represented by the subjects ranged from the beginner (20%) to intermediate (7%). The biggest groups constituted elementary (27%) and pre-intermediate students (46%). Among the comprehensive school students only 57 subjects had, according to their English teachers no (true beginners), or very little, experience of learning English (false beginners). The number of students representing this particular level of language competence was almost twice as large in the case of the profiled secondary school students. The teachers working at this type of schools tried to explain this fact by claiming that the majority of the first grade students they taught represented only the beginner level of language competence, mainly due to their very low motivation to learn, but also frequently to the lower level of cognitive development, in comparison with comprehensive school students. The students representing the elementary level of language competence constituted the second largest group of all the subjects. This is connected with the fact that English is the most commonly taught foreign language in all types of schools in Poland. This means that starting their education at the secondary school, most students had already learnt English in the primary school, or gymnasium. The biggest number of students represented the pre-intermediate level of competence. This is also the level which most of the beginner and elementary students finally reach after three years of learning in comprehensive and profiled secondary schools. Only two groups of students participating in the project and attending comprehensive schools represented the intermediate level of language competence.

When asked to express their opinions about opportunities to respond to questions concerning their teacher's classroom performance many students stated that it was the first time in their learning history when they were requested to present their view on that particular topic. Therefore, they greatly appreciated the chance to participate in the research project, claiming that teachers should undergo regular students' assessment to be able to teach and build rapport with students more effectively.

2.2 Teachers of English

The group of English teachers who were asked to participate in the project consisted of 30 language instructors. They represented different levels of education: two-thirds of them held

an M.A.degree in TEFL, while seven of them held a B.A degree in TEFL and 4 were re-qualified teachers with an M.A. degree in the subjects other than English - one teacher had completed studies in biology, two teachers in French and one teacher in Russian philology. As can be seen, all of the teachers had the necessary qualifications to teach English at secondary schools (Table 9).

Age	Length of teaching practice	M.A. in TEFL	B.A. in TEFL	M.A. in other philologies	M.A. in other subjects
20-30	**1-5 years**	10	7	-	-
31-40	**6-10**	7	-	2	1
41-50 and more	**11-26**	2	-	1	-
Total number of teachers		**19**	**7**	**3**	**1**

Table 9 Teachers' age and qualifications

As for teaching experience, the teachers did not vary considerably. Because most of them were relatively young people, their professional experience was not extensive. Only in the case of three teachers, it was longer than eleven years. It also must be noted that seven of the teachers were still students. The young age and therefore little experience that almost two-thirds of the subjects had in teaching found in some cases its reflection in the number of discrepancies which appeared in the evaluation of their work and behaviour by themselves and their students. It turned out that the younger the teachers were, the harder it was for some of them to objectively evaluate different aspects of their work as English teachers (Table 4).

It may be assumed that in the area of Upper Silesia where the research project was conducted, and also everywhere else in Poland, English is the most popular of all the foreign languages taught taking into consideration the high demand for English teachers, not only those with their M.A. in TEFL but also those who holding their M.A. degree in subjects other than English re-qualified to teach it.

None of the teachers had ever participated in a project with similar aims and objectives and only a few of them admitted to devoting their free time to systematic self-reflection. They therefore appreciated the possibility to take part in the project, expressing the view that their active involvement in it would surely contribute to their professional development.

The tasks of all the teachers participating in the research project were:

1) to fill in a questionnaire consisting of questions concerning:
    - their attitudes to and beliefs about teaching a foreign langauge

- the self-assessment of their work and behaviour in the classroom

2) to be observed twice by the teacher-researcher
3) to participate in a two-hour interview session following the stage of questionnaire analysis and lesson observations.

All the teachers voluntarily agreed to participate in the project in order to learn more about themselves as professionals and about the way they were perceived by their students.

2.3 Teacher-researcher

Being the initiator and the supervisor of the research project I was at the same time its participant. As a teacher of English with an M.A degree in TEFL I have taught students of different age groups and language competence levels for six years. I started teaching in a private language school where I worked for the five year period of my studies. Since my graduation I have been teaching English at a comprehensive school.

Frequent involvement in different projects aimed at motivating students to learn, for example, in organising different types of language competition in co-operation with my colleagues, help me to keep a high level of motivation to teach. Active participation in workshops and language conferences, writing articles for magazines for teachers and carrying out different types of small-scale, i.e. comprising only one or two language classes, action research projects facilitates my professional improvement and the rapport I have with learners.

I decided to take part in the research project by writing a teacher diary, believing that active participation in the project would raise my awareness of the mechanisms governing my professional life. Being aware that systematic self-reflection upon one's didactic style has great influence on both the quality of teaching and the rapport with students, I attempted to take different measures, including writing a diary, trying to learn what my own style was in order to be able to develop it effectively. I also came to the conclusion that after a five year period of work in a secondary school, it was a perfect time for me to diagnose different aspects of my classroom behaviour in order to take measures aimed at improving it.

As I have no negative memories connected with learning at school or teaching either, my attitude to teaching is very positive. I perceive teaching to be a very rewarding profession, giving the teacher a chance to learn about peers and learners and about oneself through interacting with others. I am aware of the fact that my experience as a language teacher finds its reflection in the way I conduct lessons and treat students. Thus, I take constant effort to

identify my teaching habits in order to be able to gradually eliminate or at least control those which negatively influence the teaching-learning process. Being a very active person I prefer a dynamic pace of teaching, with a variety of teaching activities to be done during a lesson. As an extrovert I feel the need to work with people, to co-operate and build a good rapport with them. Sharing knowledge with students and helping them to learn gives me a chance of professional fulfilment. However, I also simultaneously try to 'notice' the possible dangers resulting from the way that my personality is reflected in my classroom behaviour. I am aware that there are aspects of my classroom conduct which may not necessarily contribute to my students' learning success.

3. Data collection instruments

The choice of data collection instruments was made after careful consideration of the usefulness of each for achieving the research aims of the project. The data was collected by means of five research tools:

- A learner questionnaire: the use of this research instrument made it possible to gather information from many students at the same time as it was easy to administer and then to collect. This particular form of data collection also ensured anonymity of the students in this way influencing the level of sincerity of their responses
- A teacher questionnaire: this research tool was used at the initial stage of gathering data from the teachers to give them time to structure and verbalise their impressions and reflections concerning many different aspects of their work and behaviour in the classroom (no time limit was set for filling in the questionnaire)
- FL lesson observations: the lesson observations which followed the analysis of the teachers' and learners' questionnaires made it possible to verify whether the teachers' self-analysis was reflected in their classroom practices or not and whether the students' evaluation of the teachers' work was objective, or biased by students' attitudes towards the teacher
- interviews with the teachers: this tool was selected to be used in the project as the form of a semi-structured interview made it possible for the teachers to express views and comments upon different issues in an informal and therefore conducive to reflection atmosphere

– the teacher's diary: the teacher's diary constituted a crucial part of the teaching portfolio and was used to record all the comments and observations I had after conducting individual lessons. Regular self-reflection upon my beliefs, expectations and attitudes concerning different aspects of the teaching/learning process was planned to lead to conclusions which would contribute to more effective teaching.

3.1 The learner questionnaire

The questionnaire for learners had two main objectives. The first one was to examine what the students' attitude to English as a school subject was. The second objective was to learn how the students assessed different aspects of English teachers' performance in the classroom.
The questionnaire was divided into two parts (Appendix 1). In the first part of the questionnaire the students were encouraged to answer questions concerning:

- their learning history
- individual motivation(s) to learn English
- difficulties they experienced in learning English
- preferred types of activities and forms of work in the FL lesson.

In the second part of the questionnaire the students expressed their opinion concerning their English teacher's:

– personality: the students were asked to determine to what degree their teacher possessed features of character listed and whether they perceive him/her to be a 'born teacher' or not (on the scale of 1 to 5)

– authority: the students were asked to define the notion of 'teacher authority' and to determine whether in their opinion their English teacher tried to be an authority for them or not, what s/he did to build this authority and how successful s/he was in becoming an authority. The students were also encouraged to indicate here which aspects of the English teacher's behaviour best reflected his/her attitude to the job and to state whether s/he had ever treated students partially. They were also asked to comment upon the level of stress which they experienced in their English classroom. Students' answers to the questions included in this part of the questionnaire played a very important role in determining the quality of rapport between the particular teacher and his/her students and therefore they indirectly made it possible to predict their level of success in learning a FL. If students do not like and do not respect their teachers they stand little chance of becoming successful in learning the subject even

though often, at a previous stage of their education (e.g. gymnasium), they might have been quite successful learners.

- ability to keep discipline in the classroom: the students' task was to indicate which of the management strategies their English teachers used most and least frequently to deal with disruptive behaviour, to show in which situations the teacher used these strategies and to assess whether the teacher's behaviour in a particular situation was appropriate or not. In the case when the teacher behaved in a way which was unacceptable to students, they were asked to offer their own ideas about how the discipline problem could have been reacted to. Gordon (1998) claims that the atmosphere in the classroom connected with the rapport a FL teacher has with his/her students depends to a great extent on the teacher's ability to prevent and deal with disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Thus, to learn how English teachers deal with discipline problems and what their learners think about the methods they use, the students were supposed to indicate how often the teachers made use of different strategies for keeping discipline in the classroom and to determine in which situations their language teachers used those strategies.

The students were also requested to express their opinions concerning their English teacher's style of teaching and the roles played by him/her in the classroom most and least frequently. It was also their task to evaluate the level of their English teacher's management and pedagogic skills.

Another very important aspect of teachers' behaviour in the classroom, which shapes the students' attitude to the teacher and indirectly to the language taught, is the way that the teacher motivates students to learn the language. To get to know what the students think about the methods their English teachers use in the classroom to encourage them to learn, the learners were asked to indicate the frequency of use and the effectiveness of the teaching strategies which were assumed to be motivating ones.

Body language was the last aspect of the teachers' classroom performance to be commented upon by the learners. This part of the questionnaire included questions concerning:

- the influence teacher's non-verbal behaviour had on students
- characteristic gestures and facial expressions used by teachers at different stages of the lesson,

- teacher's eye-contact with learners and its influence on students,
- teacher's non-verbal reactions to critical incidents (misbehaviour in the classroom).

The answers provided to the questions concerning the teachers' body language in the English classroom were supposed to cast some light on the teachers' and the students' awareness of the non-verbal aspects of interaction and their influence on the classroom interaction.

3.2 The teacher questionnaire

The main objective of the teacher questionnaire was to encourage the teachers to self-reflect upon their attitude to English as a foreign language, as well as upon their work and behaviour in the classroom. The degree to which teachers' self-evaluation presented in the questionnaires and concerning different aspects of their classroom behaviour found its reflection in their students' opinions about the teachers and in the comments on the lesson based on the observations were also the focus of interest.

The teacher questionnaire, like the one for the students, consisted of two parts (Appendix 2). The first part included questions concerning individual teacher's professional development. The teachers were supposed to determine if in their own opinion, they had developed professionally since their graduation and if so, what measures they had taken to develop. They were also asked to indicate how stressful teaching was for them and to determine which factors they perceived to be most and least stressful for them as FL teachers.

Finally, the teachers were encouraged to self-reflect upon:

- their own motivation to teach and its fluctuation over time,
- their strengths and weaknesses as foreign language teachers,
- the correlation between the effort they put into teaching and the results obtained by the students.

Asking the teachers to self-reflect upon the aforementioned issues had the aim of gathering information which would help the teachers to become more aware of their behaviour in the classroom and to understand it better.

The second part of the questionnaire contained the same questions as those included in part two of the questionnaire for students. To answer the questions included in this part of the questionnaire the teachers were expected to self-reflect upon different aspects of their

behaviour in the classroom and their attitude to themselves as professionals as well as to teaching English in general. As in the learners' questionnaire, the reflection focused on:

- the influence of different personality factors on teaching,
- the ways teachers chose to build their authority,
- the strategies applied to motivate students to work,
- the teachers' individual teaching styles and roles played in the classroom,
- management strategies used in their classroom,
- teachers' assessment of their own teaching skills,
- teachers' body-language in the classroom.

The data collected by means of this questionnaire as well as the questionnaire for learners and lesson observations constituted the basis for comparison of opinions that the teachers, the students and the observer had about the teachers' classroom performance.

3.3 Lesson observations

During a period of ten months, sixty lessons in total (i.e. two lessons of each teacher participating in the project) were observed to check whether students' opinions of their English teachers' classroom behaviour and the opinions held by the teachers found their reflection in the reality of the foreign language classroom. Lesson observations were used at this stage of the project to enable credible evaluation of the teachers' and the learners' evaluation of different aspects of the teachers' work and behaviour in the classroom.

The observation form focused on the same aspects of the teachers' classroom performance as the second part of each of the two questionnaires: for the teachers and for the students (Appendix 3).

The observations were always arranged in advance so that in many cases just after the lesson was observed, an interview with the teacher could be carried out and the lesson observations compared with the views held by both the teacher and the students that s/he taught.

3.4 Interviews with the teachers

The lesson observations carried out, together with the opinions expressed by the teachers and the learners in their questionnaires, made it possible to create an overall picture of who the language teachers were as professionals and people, what the quality of their rapport with the

learners was and what socio- and psycholinguistic factors shaped the classroom communication. However, there appeared to be discrepancies between the lesson observation results and the views expressed by the teachers and the students. The interview was therefore selected as the instrument to be able to identify what the sources of these discrepancies were.

A semi-structured type of the interview was chosen to be used at this stage of data collection, as it left space for additional questions and comments. At the same time it also helped to introduce informality of interaction, which was found very important as only in a relaxed atmosphere would the teachers feel secure enough to answer the questions.

The interview consisted of two parts. First, the teachers were presented with the data collected by means of both the questionnaires and the lesson observations. Next, the teachers were asked to account for the possible reasons for discrepancies which had appeared during the analysis of the gathered data. Each interview was different as the discrepancies concerned different aspects of teacher's behaviour for each individual teacher participating in the project.

The interview sessions, which lasted from 90-120 minutes each, were audio-recorded and later analysed (Appendix 4).

3.5 The teacher diary

The last of the research tools used in the project was a teacher's diary which was kept for a period of one school year as a part of the teacher-researcher's working portfolio. It included my verbalised reflections concerning both the teaching-learning process and the nature of the teacher-learner rapport in the classroom. While writing a diary I focused my attention on the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors contributing to the quality of the classroom interaction.

The entries of the diary were written on regular basis, up to four times a week. The diary took a form of delayed introspection as each new entry was written at school after the lesson I reflected upon. While writing a diary I focused my attention on presenting opinions, convictions and observations concerning the evaluation of my own work as a language teacher, as well as the description and assessment of my endeavours to build a positive rapport with my students in the light of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors influencing classroom communication.

In order to present and analyse the diary data the following was used:

1. Presentation of myself as a professional

In this part of the work I tried to analyse how such psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors as my personality, beliefs about teaching and my body language influenced the quality of the classroom discourse

2. Presentation of different aspects of my classroom performance in the light of different psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors influencing foreign language classroom interaction.This part of the diary analysis was to provide data on:

- the measures I took to meet the needs of students as individuals and language learners, i.e. how I approached individual learners and what I did to raise their motivation to learn English
- how I used English to give my students feedback to errors they made and to express my approval
- how I managed the classroom, i.e. what I did to maintain classroom discipline, what roles I played in the classroom most and least frequently, and how my way of management influenced the rapport with students.

Writing the teacher's diary made me aware of how thematically varied and at the same time how valuable the reflections concerning my own person as a foreign language teacher, my classroom performance and the rapport I had with my students were for becoming a more effective teacher. This regular self-reflection, initiated by the process of writing, made me more self-aware and helped me to look critically at the way I taught. It also contributed to my better understanding of what and how different psycho- and sociolinguistic factors influenced the classroom interaction between me and my students.

The idea to start writing a diary had occupied my mind long before its first line was written. However, there had always appeared some obstacle standing in the way to start. The need to keep up with the requirements of the teachers' promotion programme finally triggered my regular diary-writing sessions. Nonetheless, the diary is rather personal than a professional record. It needs to be stressed that I owe an enormous part of my development not only to the process of writing itself but also to the process of analyzing the diary for the research purposes.

Nowhere in the text the difficulty I had with the simple act of reflection was mentioned. However, what seemed to be simple before the writing process started proved to be an everyday struggle with lack of time and generally the complexity of subjective perceptions and personal impressions of school life to be written down. It was important for me to pass through the whole one-year period of diary writing without unnecessary breakdowns in order

to accomplish the aim: to become a more reflective and therefore, a better teacher. I had to devote some time in order to incorporate what I learned on the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the diary data into my - hopefully improved way of teaching in order to learn how to be more effective when teaching English, in particular in teenage groups of learners. I believe that the time I spent writing the diary, analyzing it and implementing the conclusions reached into my teaching made me a more 'mature' professional. It seems to me that there are two advantages that other teachers may gain from reading the diary. First, they may see how I developed and changed as a teacher and secondly, in the observations presented they may find the reflexion of their own teaching practice with all its delights and complexities.

4. Final remarks

Conducting the research project was a very effort-demanding and time-consuming process. Preparing the research tools, collecting and later on analysing and interpreting the data required dedication and systematic work to go through each stage of the project. As the subjects participating in the research were highly motivated to participate in it, there were no major problems with collecting the data. Both the students and the teachers willingly devoted their time and energy to share their views, experiences and observations believing that in this way they contributed to better understanding of the nature of classroom discourse.

Chapter III Data presentation and analysis

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the data gathered during the research. The data was collected on the basis of the five research tools presented in Chapter II, i.e. a learner questionnaire, a teacher questionnaire, a lesson observation, an interview with teachers and a teacher's diary.

The analysis of the data gathered during the research consists of four parts. The first one includes the presentation and analysis of the first part of the student questionnaire aimed at examining the students' attitudes to English as a school subject. The focus of the second part is the presentation and analysis of the teacher questionnaire data concerning the teachers' professional development, motivation to teach and stress at work. In the third part the data from the teacher and learner questionnaires concerning the English teachers' work and classroom behaviour is presented and its analysis is supported with lesson observation comments. The data collected by means of the three research tools is analysed sin parallel here in order to be able to point out the possible similarities but also discrepancies in the assessment of the teachers' work and behaviour by the learners, the observer and the teachers themselves. Finally, the last part constitutes the presentation and analysis of the teacher's diary (Table 10).

Chapter III	Contents	Focus
Part 1	Presentation and analysis of Part 1 of the questionnaire for students	The students' attitude to English
Part 2	Presentation and analysis of Part 1 of the questionnaire for teachers	The teachers' professional development, motivation to teach and stress at work
Part 3	Presentation and analysis of Part 2 of the questionnaire for learners, Part 2 of the questionnaire for teachers and the lesson observation data	Different aspects of the teachers' work and behaviour in the classroom
Part 4	Presentation and analysis of the teacher's diary	Internal world of the teacher's reflections upon herself, her learners and teaching in general

Table 10 The sequence of data analysis in the chapter

The aim of the project is to raise the awareness of the teachers participating in it of how much they know about their students and about themselves as professionals, how is their

classroom performance assessed by their students and the external observer and how different socio- and psycholinguistic factors involved in teaching and learning influence the mutual contacts between them and the students.

1. The learners (learner questionnaire, part one)

1.1 Motivation to learn English

Williams and Burden (1997:120) claim that motivation is 'a state of cognitive arousal which stimulates an individual to act and make an effort to reach some goal'. In the case of foreign language learners the goal is making progress in learning the language to be able to reach other life goals. The answers that the students provided show that the factors which most influence their motivation to learn are those of instrumental character. The most important of them appears to be students' personal interest in the language which 87% of students perceive to be the key to understanding films, songs, computer game instructions, but also to being able to chat with foreign friends and surf the Internet.

The remaining factors are also connected with instrumental motivation and in many cases with short-term aims that the students want to reach. The conviction that almost 80% of the students express is that they will need English in their work. Although this factor is connected with long-term motivation, it is considered to be one of the most valid factors for the majority of the students in both types of school. The data collected shows that the young people try to predict their future and want to see 'further' than just their school lives. They are aware that the job market requires good knowledge of at least one foreign language and although a future job is for the majority of teenagers a distant aim, it motivates them to wor. (Table 11).

Factors influencing the process of learning English	**Students (%)**
Student's own personal interests	87
Conviction that the knowledge of English will prove useful in a future job	80
Choice of English at the Matura exam	74
Fear of not getting a promotion	62
Parents' expecations of good marks	55
Fear of a bad mark	52
Fear of malicious comments from your classmates	17
Competition with classmates to be the best in the class	17
Teacher's opinion about a student	7
Intention to study English philology	5

Table 11 Factors influencing the process of learning English

Another important factor shaping the students' motivation to learn is the need to take the Matura exam in a foreign language. 74% of the students claim that they are going to take the final exam in English. Almost two-thirds of the respondents claim that what is an important motivating factor for them is the fear that if they do not learn English they may not get a positive mark in the final certificate and be therefore forced to repeat the year. Parental control and supervision strongly influence the motivation of more than half of the students, which is the proof that parents' interest in the progress their children make in learning the foreign language makes the students more systematic learners who aim at obtaining good results. A similar number of teenagers learn English mostly because they are afraid of the bad mark they may get. These are probably those students whose parents are interested in their school work. The opinion that the teachers hold about the particular student is the factor strongly influencing the process of learning English for 7% of the students attending mainly comprehensive schools. The students attending the profiled secondary school do not seem to be very interested in the teacher's opinion and thus they do not consider it to be important for their language progress.

The data shows that while the opinions of the teachers strongly influence the process of FL learning of 7% of the students, fear to hear malicious comments concerning a particular students' poor performance from their peers is considered to be a strong motivational factor for 17% of the teenagers. The same percentage of the students claim that competition with peers is for them a strong impulse for learning. This shows how powerful the influence of the peer group on students' motivation and therefore their language progress is. It is very important for the teachers to remember that, as Harmer (2001) observes, peer approval may frequently turn out to be more important for the teenage learners, than the teacher's approval and attention.

It is also instrumental motivation which influences the process of learning of 5% of the subjects who express the opinion that what influences their English learning a lot are their future educational plans. They are planning to study English philology. This group of students does not need any additional motivation on part of the teacher as they are aware that only the best results in the Matura exam will give them the possibility to study what they want and where they want.

1.2 Attitude to English as a school subject

1.2.1 Relevance of English to student (future) lives

Although English teachers may do their best to create an atmosphere most conducive to learning a FL, it is their students' attitude to the language, partly influenced by the teachers' efforts to create the best conditions for learning, that greatly influences the learners' success in learning the language. How students perceive English shapes their level of motivation and encourages or discourages them from learning it.

On the basis of the data collected it appears that more than two-thirds of the students are convinced that English will prove useful in their future lives. Only 20% are not sure whether they will have a chance to use it after they finish school and 3% hold the opinion that English will not be useful in their lives and work at all (Table 12).

As the students' conviction that learning English will contribute to a better life in the future positively stimulates their motivation to learn, it is therefore the teacher's task to plan lessons in such a way that the foreign language taught is relevant to students' needs. The learners must have the chance to see that what they learn may be used successfully in different real-life situations. Both pre-service and in-service teachers need to be aware that only meaningful learning, especially in the case of the profiled secondary school learners who are the group of subjects less convinced of the need to know a foreign language, will encourage the students to put effort into learning.

Relevance of English to students' future lives				
Type of school	**Very useful**	**Quite useful**	**Not very useful**	**Not at all useful**
	Students (% of the whole sample)			
Comprehensive school	35	18	4	2
Profiled secondary school	18	12	6	5

Table 12 Students' perception of relevance of English to their future lives

Most of the students attending comprehensive schools perceive English to be relevant to their future lives. The explanation of this fact is relatively simple. The overwhelming majority of them consider taking the Matura exam and starting further studies to be the prime aims of their lives justifying, in this way, their choice of this type of school. They need to have good knowledge of a foreign language to be able to start the studies that they want and to find satisfying jobs in the future.

The collected data shows that two-thirds of the profiled secondary school students are convinced that learning English will bring them some benefits in their future lives. However, almost one-third of the students attending this type of school (as opposed to one-tenth in the case of the comprehensive schoool students) do not perceive English to be relevant to their future lives. Explanation of such perception may be found in the students' attitude to learning, which is often very different from that of the comprehensive school learners. As they are generally poorer students than their friends from the comprehensive school, their self-assessment as language learners is often very low and consequently they simply do not believe they may succeed in the future.

If the teachers working in the profiled secondary school want their students to learn and make progress they must constantly look for ways to convince their learners that learning English at school is not a waste of time as some of them think, and that it is inextricably connected with different real-life situations in which English finds its application. On the other hand, the main task of the teachers who work with the comprehensive school learners is to ensure high standards of teaching as most of the students have long-term motivation to learn.

1.2.2 Perception of the level of difficulty of English as a foreign langauge

When analysing the students' responses to the question, it appears that the biggest group of students (65%) perceive English to be relatively difficult to learn which, without doubt, has an influence on the students' attitude to the language. 22% of the respondents claim English is easy to learn and 13% find it very difficult. Most of these are profiled secondary school learners who also find most of other subjects difficult to learn, English being no exception.

One of the possible reasons why some students perceive English to be difficult to learn may be the fact that even within one language group there are students who represent different level of language competence and also mixed abilities, which makes it hard for the teacher to satisfy all the students' needs concerning the methods, materials, pace of work, etc. that would be most suitable for each of them. English may also be perceived by some students to be difficult to learn if we take into consideration that in comparison with other school subjects it is not taught in Polish which constitutes a serious problem and a discouraging factor for many students. In order to be able to do the task assigned by the teacher, the students first need to understand the instructions, which is not always easy, especially for those whose level of language competence is low.

Looking for the reasons for such perceptions it may be hypothesized that those students who have difficulties learning English in most cases probably experience problems learning other subjects as well due to lack of learning skills, lack of motivation or generally unwillingness to learn. The language may also be difficult to learn for all those who do not see the point of learning it for future purposes. On the other hand, English may be easy to learn for those who like it and are interested in learning it. Also, having a skilled and creative teacher who is able both to give interesting lessons and to explain all the language intricacies easily and clearly contributes to perceiving English as not difficult to learn.

The students' questionnaire responses concerning the level of difficulty of different language skills and subsystems show that what the students perceive to be most difficult to learn is free and fluent speaking (Table 13).

Aspects of learning English	**Very difficult (%)**	**Difficult (%)**	**Easy (%)**
Learning grammar	32	51	17
Learning vocabulary	12	43	45
Understanding what I read	16	62	22
Correct pronunciation	22	40	38
Understanding texts recorded on the cassettes, CD's	19	65	16
Understanding what my teacher says	13	53	34
Preparing written work	25	52	23
Fluent speaking	44	44	12

Table 13 The level of difficulty of different langague skills and subsystems in the students' view

Free speaking is considered to be very difficult to master for almost half of the students (44%):

'When I start speaking English I suddenly forget all the words that I need to use'

' Even though I have been learning English for five years I can only introduce myself and say something about my interests and hobbies - free speaking is really difficult'

'I am very talkative when I speak Polish but when I'm asked to speak English, I somehow cannot utter a word'

One of the possible reasons why speaking is perceived by the students to be the most difficult skill is the fact that teacher talking time (TTT) in the lesson is in most cases much longer than that of students' (STT): it is a teacher who gives instructions, who corrects, who repeats each correct answer after the student and finally, it is the teacher who expresses

approval and encouragement. Usually, and unfortunately, students are not given many opportunities to practise speaking English with the teacher as s/he most frequently plays the role of the supervisor of the class work. They have a better chance to speak when they work in pairs or groups, but here the problem of language accuracy appears – one teacher in the group of twenty or more students is not able to correct all the language mistakes.

The next aspect of language learning which the students find difficult to learn is English grammar - one-third of the learners consider learning grammar to be very difficult and for more than half of them it is quite difficult to use it:

'There are so many tenses and so many grammatical forms that I get lost in it as soon as I try to say something'

'I hate grammar. For me it is really difficult. Even though I know the rules I always make some mistakes when I try to use it in order to make a sentence'

Understanding listening activities constitutes another problem for the respondents. For 19% of them it is very difficult to understand the text recorded on the cassette or a CD while 65% find it quite problematic:

'I cannot understand English recordings- people speak much too fast'

'My teacher speaks English more slowly than most of the speakers from the recordings'

'I am not able to distinguish separate words. Whatever they say sounds like a one big word for me'

Too little exposure to the live language seems to be the reason for the difficulties that the students experience when listening to the recordings in the classroom. Except for teacher's talk at school, listening activities they do during lessons and songs that they listen to in their free time at home, they do not have many opportunities to hear real English around them. Obviously, many students, especially the low-motivated ones, do not even look for such opportunities. Only a few students are interested in, or competent enough, to watch programmes on the BBC channel. Even if they chat in English in Internet chat-rooms they do so only in writing. Because student mobility programmes are not very popular in Poland yet, the majority of students do not have the chance to practise their language in an English speaking country regularly during the school year. Although Polish students have problems understanding recordings in English, even though they hear them two or sometimes even three times, Ur (1996:108) advocates that the students should have only 'one listening' if the teacher wants to adjust classroom communication to the real life context. She stresses that in real-life discourse the message is not repeated over and over again but just once. In reality,

many students feel the need to listen to the tape more than twice to be able to understand the recorded message.

Reading comprehension activities are also perceived by the students as a challenge. According to the research data more than two-thirds of the students find it quite troublesome to understand what they read. The explanation for such a high percentage of the students experiencing difficulties when doing reading comprehension activities may be the fact that many young people are not accustomed to regular reading sessions or to reading in gereral, even in their mother tongue, and thus poorly developed reading skills make it hard for the students to understand a written text.

A considerably large group of respondents, constituting half of all the subjects, find writing activities quite difficult to perform and for 25% of them it is really difficult to express what they want in writing. One student commented:

'I know what I want to write but I find it difficult to find in my mind the words and expressions I could use to express what I want.'

The possible explanation for the difficulties experienced by the students may be the fact that the secondary school learning system does not give students enough opportunities to improve writing skills. In an average language group there are twenty students which means that an English teacher has about 20 essays or any other pieces of writing to check at a time. Correcting written work requires a considerable effort and it is very time consuming, so some language teachers only check about 2 or 3 works from each student in a term. No process writing in the foreign language course means not much chances for the students to master their writing skills and therefore not much chances to produce successful and high standard pieces of writing. Even if students exchange written messages with their English speaking pen-friends, they do not receive feedback on their language writing ability as what they write is not corrected by their foreign friends. What also needs to be mentioned is that school writing tasks tend to focus on getting 'a ready product' in the form of, for example, a story or a report rather than on improving, or working upon one particular element of a given piece of writing, e.g.beginning or ending paragraph construction during one lesson.

Understanding what the teacher says in the classroom is a problem for 13% of the students and more than half of them find this quite difficult at times, too:

'I know she does her best to explain to us what she means but sometimes I somehow cannot understand a word'

'She speaks too fast and uses too complex sentences for me to understand her'.

It may be hypothetised that some of the teachers do not reflect upon the way they speak to students. Also, they seem to be unaware of non-verbal signals expressing lack of understanding of the teacher's words that their students surely send to them during lessons.

Another aspect of FL learning which students assess to be quite difficult to master is pronunciation. Only 38% of the respondents claim to have no problem with this, whereas 62% find it relatively problematic:

'Some of English words and phrases are real 'tongue twisters' – you may twist your tongue and you will still not manage to pronounce what you intend correctly'

'English people have in their speech the sounds that Polish people do not have and some of them are almost impossible for me to pronounce'.

It may be assumed that these difficulties result from the fact that the teachers do not pay much attention to practising pronunciation with their students being unaware of the need to do it. Harmer (2001:183) indicates that some teachers 'may claim that even without a formal pronunciation syllabus, and without specific pronunciation teaching, many students seem to acquire serviceable pronunciation in the course of their studies'. The teachers may also feel 'nervous of dealing with sounds and intonation' (Harmer, 2001) being convinced that they have already too much work in the classroom and therefore no time to teach pronunciation.

The aspect of learning English at school which is assessed by the students to be the easiest is vocabulary learning. Most respondents claim to have no or only minor problems in learning foreign words:

'Words are easy to learn. Unfortunately, they are even easier to forget – especially if they are not used regularly'

'I like vocabulary tests – If only I have time to prepare for them, I always get a good grade'.

The opinions held by the students are not very surprising taking into consideration that Polish secondary school learners are used to rote memorisation of huge parts of material in different subjects. The research data shows that learning by heart requires from the students less effort than, for example, learning grammar, which involves logical thinking and analysis of grammatical material.

1.2.3 Attitude to learning English at school

For many students the best indicator of a person's level of foreign language competence is his/her ability to speak it fluently. Therefore whether students believe it is possible to develop

speaking skills by school instruction or not, greatly influences their classroom behaviour and indirectly also the rapport they have with a teacher.

The data shows that two-thirds of the comprehensive school students claim that it is possible to learn English at school at a level which enables them to express ideas fluently, whereas the opinion of one-third of the subjects attending the same type of school is the opposite. When asked to justify their views, the first group of the students come up with the following arguments which they claim to be prerequisites for success in developing speaking skills:

- a good teacher dedicated to his/her job and able to get on well with students (56%)
- the number of lessons of English in a week (47%)
- language materials appealing to students' language level and interests (32%)
- students' own engagement and effort made to learn the language (27%)

On the other hand, their peers who claim that it is not possible to learn to speak English fluently only by school instruction hold the opinion that:

- there are too many students in each language group and therefore a language teacher is not able to devote enough attention to each particular student (65%),
- the groups are heterogeneous, i.e. there are many levels of competence within one group which makes it hard for the teacher to select language materials appropriate for every language level and to establish such a pace of the lesson which would suit everybody (48%).

Less than half of the profiled secondary school learners participating in the research project (48%) believe that they can learn to speak English fluently at school, supporting their opinions with the same arguments as their peers from the comprehensive school. The remaining 52% are of different opinion and claim that school is not a good place to learn to speak English fluently for the following reasons:

'We don't understand our teacher so she speaks Polish for most of the lesson time'

'We can't speak and therefore we don't speak'

'We are ashamed to make mistakes and so we are afraid to speak'

'Speaking in the classroom is artificial'

'I don't need to speak English because I'm not going to leave Poland'.

As can be seen on the basis of the beliefs presented above, the motivation of the students from profiled secondary school is different from that of the teenagers attending comprehensive schools. They do not believe it is possible to learn to speak English fluently at

school mainly because their self-esteem is low. They do not want to take the risk of making mistakes, as they are afraid that other students may laugh at them. As they cannot see any practical application of English in their lives, their motivation to learn is low as well.

Although there is a popular opinion that the majority of students in Poland take extra lessons, the research shows that although the number of those who attend courses outside school is still substantial but not very high(Table 14).

Type of school	**Students participating in extra classes of English (%)**
Comprehensive school	37
Profiled secondary school	21

Table 14 Participation in extra classes of English

The questionnaire data reveals that both the comprehensive school and the profiled secondary school students take extra lessons of English mainly to be able to speak English more frequently. The majority of the students attending extra language courses are convinced that a private language school is a good place to learn to speak English fluently for the following reasons:

'The teacher does not waste his/her time dealing with disruptive behaviour'

'Our teacher speaks perfect English and we take her as our model'

'The teacher is able to supervise our group work and our language production much better than that in the state run school because there are only 10 of us'

'Language groups are small so we have the chance to speak with the teacher several times during each lesson'

'Because groups are smaller than those at school our teacher knows us better and prepares lesssons devoted to topics that we want to speak about'

'Many schools arrange additional speaking classes we can participate in for free'

'Private school gives us opportunity to speak with native speakers of English which motivates us to learn and speak'

'All the members of my language group really want to speak and we always interrupt the person who starts using Polish'.

The learners claim that language groups are not so large, so that it is easier for the teacher to manage the teaching-learning process more effectively and devote more time to individual learners which gives them many opportunities to practise speaking with the teacher

(STT). The main reason why some of the students decide to participate in private tutorials is that they feel ashamed of making mistakes when speaking in public and therefore they often play the role of class 'phantoms', not being seen or heard in the language classroom. For such students a lesson with a private tutor is the only chance to practise speaking.

When justifying their participation in private language courses the students also came up with the following arguments:

'I have more chances to speak because there are not many students in the group'

'I want to catch up with school material'

'I need faster pace of learning than that I have at school'

'I want to be better and better'

'In spite of teacher's effort there is still too much material and not enough time to explain every student's question and doubt'.

The arguments are listed above in the order of the frequency of their appearance in student questionnaires with the first argument being the most popular. As can be concluded, the two most important factors apart from the need to develop speaking skills which influence students' decisions whether to participate in extra classes of English or not are the students' inability to cope with the challenges of the classroom learning and their level of satisfaction with school instruction.

Those respondents who do not make use of any other form of language learning other than the secondary school course give the following explanation for not taking extra lessons of English (in order of frequency):

- they do not have enough money,
- they do not have enough free time,
- they have a 'good' teacher at school,
- the level of English in their language group is high enough for their needs.

For students with an extended programme of FL learning, the most important factor influencing their decision not to take extra lessons is their conviction that they have a good teacher and that five lessons of English a week is enough to master it. Those who participate in additional afternoon classes see them mostly as the chance to improve their English. On the other hand, those students with only three lessons of English a week report that they take extra lessons mainly to catch up with the language material they did not manage to understand at school. As for the students attending classes with a profile other than language and therefore always having fewer than five lessons of English a week, the main obstacles in

taking extra classes are lack of money, time and motivation to learn the language. The choice and the order of the arguments quoted may be easily explained by taking into consideration the fact that the fee for participation in the language course generally constitutes a large expense for the budget of many families and that some parents simply cannot finance a FL course for their children. Many students with three lessons of English a week admit to having problems with learning it. The main reason for the difficulties they encounter is limited contact with the foreign language and with the FL teacher, which frequently makes the students unable to cope with language problems on their own. Thus, they prefer to spend their time participating in activities which they find more motivating and enjoyable.

On the basis of the responses provided by the students it may be seen that no matter what type of school they attend, they are convinced that a good teacher, who not only speaks English fluently, but also has a good rapport with them, has a great influence on the development of their speaking skills and on their attitude to the FL in general. As can be noticed, whether the teachers are able to establish positive rapport is for students as important as the particular teacher's professional competence. Analysing students' opinions makes it possible to distinguish different levels of satisfaction in relation to learning to speak English fluently at school. The overwhelming majority of the students mainly those with extended programme of FL learning at the comprehensive schools are convinced of the effectiveness of language learning at school and believe in their success, provided they get on well with their teacher. Within the group of the students with three lessons of English a week both in the comprehensive and the profiled secondary schools, conviction about successful development of speaking skills at school not so strong. In the responses they give, the students have a tendency to enumerate the negative, rather than positive, aspects of learning a foreign language at school. The students claim that their language groups are too big and therefore the teacher is not able to devote as much time as they need individually. They also notice that the teacher is usually so busy teaching the new material that they are not given many opportunities to practice speaking in the classroom.

It can be therefore concluded that the greatest influence on the students' conviction whether it is possible to develop speaking skills only by instruction at school or not is the intensity of exposure to English and the quality of the rapport with the teacher. An insufficient number of lessons of English a week, together with students' inability to establish a friendly relationship with the teacher, make the students think that the development of speaking skills is very difficult, if not impossible for some of them, especially those who are poor achievers.

1.2.4 Self-reflection – the basis for student self-awareness as language learners

When asked to determine what they can do to have better marks in English, the students list many different suggestions, which shows that they are aware that whether they are successful in learning the language or not, depends not only on such factors as the teacher, the course-book or the method of teaching used, but also on their own hard work. Almost two-thirds of the subjects are convinced that their grades in English would be better if only they worked harder (Table 15).

Students' suggestions	Students' answers (%)
Learn more intensively	63
Learn regularly	10
Understand grammar better	7
Participate in extra classes	5
Learn vocabulary more systematically	3

Table 15 Factors facilitating FL progress as suggested by the students

The students perceive lack of regularity in learning and learning difficulties resulting from lack of understanding of the new language material that they experience to be the factors which make it hard for them to make quick progress. The teachers' task is therefore to diagnose which of these two factors finds its reflection in the grades obtained by the students to be able to take either the role of motivator or learning facilitator more frequently. The awareness of the individual student's strengths and weaknesses as a language learner is very important in ensuring effective classroom interaction, as it enables the student to see that s/he is more responsible for success in learning the FL than the teacher. The students' self-reflection on the effort they put in FL learning frequently makes them blame themselves rather than their teacher for the learning difficulties and failures experienced. The level of students' self-awareness as language learners is connected with their self-assessment. Those students who think of themselves as good learners are more likely to self-reflect upon their way of learning, trying to eliminate those factors which could be possible reasons for their failure in learning. On the other hand, the students with low self-assessment are not very willing to analyse why their progress is slow and the grades obtained poor. The low self-

assessment that they have results in lack of motivation to learn and, in consequence, in poor achievements in learning.

1.2.5 Group dynamics - preferences for different types of student groupings and language activities

Interaction in the classroom depends on many factors of psycho- and sociolinguistic character. The dynamics of a particular language group which influences the students' choice of groupings for doing different language activities during a lesson is one of these. The students' responses demonstrate that when doing grammatical activities the students prefer working on their own rather than in groups, pairs or together with all the other students (Table 16). This may be explained by the fact that each student has his/her own pace of working and therefore individual work gives the students 'time to think' on their own. More than one-third of students like doing grammatical exercises in groups and almost one-third of them like doing that type of tasks in pairs. It may be concluded that the students prefer pairwork to groupwork as it gives them more chances to participate actively in doing the task – they have more time to think as there is usually no competition in pairs about who will do the task first. What is more, although they do not have so much freedom to do the task individually, they are given a chance to consult a partner they usually like and trust in the case of difficulty, or to check whether their answers are correct. This kind of grouping ensures some degree of anonymity that some students, usually poor achievers, need - when they work in pairs no other group member except for the student's benchmate knows whether a particular student has trouble understanding the new language material or not.

Forms of work	In what situations	Students (%)
Working individually	-doing grammatical exercises -writing essays	43 15
Working in groups	- doing grammatical exercises -doing communicative activities - writing essays -playing language games	37 33 13 7
Working in pairs	- doing grammatical exercises - doing communicative activities - writing essays	41 60 14
Working together with the whole class	- doing grammatical exercises - doing problem solving activities -class discussions -reading aloud - doing communicative activities	16 25 23 17 5

Table 16 Student preferences concerning forms of groupings for different classroom activities

The collected data indicates that almost two-thirds of the students perceive pairwork to be their favourite grouping for doing communicative activities. Again, this is not surprising taking into consideration the fact that the majority of communicative acts involve only two interlocutors. One third of the students prefer doing communicative activities in groups and only 5% of all the students - together with their classmates. The possible explanation for this preference may be the need for some audience they could present their views to and this way practise speaking skills that they have.

As can be learnt from the data collected, the students appreciate co-operation with a partner or partners when doing writing tasks. It seems that this type of tasks is easier for the students 'to deal with' when they can both generate ideas or arguments to be included in the piece of writing and construct the text itself together.

It does not come as a surprise that groupwork is perceived by the students to be a favourite form of work when playing language games as most of the games require participation of more than two students to be able to play it successfully. Also, the students simply find it more attractive and challenging to compete against more peers than just their benchmate.

It turns out that the students like discussing different issues and doing problem solving activities together with other students from the group. It seems to be considered the best way to learn the opinions of others and approach the problem discussed from many different perspectives taking into consideration the fact that students represent usually many different points of view.

The data collected makes it possible to indicate those types of activities that the students perceive to be most and least preferred when learning English in the classroom (Table 17).

Type of activity	**5- most preferred**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1- least preferred**
Doing grammatical exercises (accuracy focus)	9	16	27	33	15
Doing lexical exercises (accuracy focus)	11	26	32	23	8
Listening to cassettes and CD's	17	28	26	17	12
Watching videos	36	24	17	13	10
Participation in language games	41	31	14	11	3
Preparing projects focusing on a selected or assigned topic	23	20	34	19	4

Table 17 Students' preferred types of language activities

The students' favourite language activities appear to be playing language games and watching video films. Many teenagers also like learning the language by preparing projects involving combining information from different thematic blocks which allows for cross-curricular use of English. The less preferred language activities are listening activities and then doing lexical exercises. Doing grammatical activities is the least preferred form of classroom activity.

It is not very surprising that the students like learning English through active participation in language games. The fact may be easily explained by taking into consideration the fact that games involve co-operation, competition and creativity at the same time, which are the three features young people are always attracted to. The popularity of video watching is understandable when we consider that teenagers these days may be considered to be a 'media generation' spending most of their free time in front of the computer or TV. The fact that 23% of the respondents do not like this form of learning may find its justification in the low level of those students' language competence, which may hinder understanding of what they hear. It may also be the result of an inappropriate choice of video materials by the teacher.

Also, it does not come as a surprise that so many students like learning English by doing project work, if we take into consideration that preparing projects requires being creative and taking initiative, which, as mentioned earlier, many students find attractive. The students appear to appreciate those language activities which give them the opportunity to express themselves in many different ways, e.g. by presenting their sports achievements, demonstrating the skills and abilities they possess, or sharing their hobbies and passions with their peers which, as claims Erikson (1963), they need to do in their search for identity.

The data shows that although more than half of the respondents claim listening tasks to be quite difficult to do, this form of language activity is quite popular with the students as they find it to be entertaining and challenging. The range of topics that the listening activities are devoted to is usually very wide, so that every student has a chance to find a recording which appeals to his/her personal interests.

When trying to understand why 48% of the subjects do not like doing grammar exercises and 31% of the learners are not interested in doing vocabulary activities, one may conclude that the young people probably do not like certain routine involved in this type of work. To avoid monotony during the lesson, many teachers assign grammatical and lexical exercises to be done at home. The students have a chance to work on the new language material also outside school and the teachers have more opportunities during the lesson to use such activities which the students find more interesting to do.

1.3 Student motivations and attitudes to English – the main findings

The students' responses indicate that most of the students seem to be aware of the fact that a good command of English will prove useful in their future lives. It is quite understandable when we consider that, not only parents and teachers, but also the mass media, constantly emphasise that good knowledge of foreign languages is one of the basic requirements of an educated person with good job prospects. Awareness of this fact seems to be one of the strongest factors which shapes the students' motivation to learn a foreign language. It needs to be remembered, however, that future job prospects are a very strong motivating factor only for those ambitious and persistent students who, starting their career at a new school, already know what they want to study and do in the future. For the rest of the students other, more short-term aims, often connected with everyday school life, constitute a more effective motivation to learn.

The role of parents in motivating students to learn cannot be undervalued, either. Harmer (2001) claims that whether parents approve of foreign language learning and of their child's success in learning it, or not, constitutes the crucial issue which influences the level of a student's motivation to a large extent as most students want, more consciously or not, to meet their parents' expectations. However, parents' interest in their child's progress is often only limited to demanding good marks. One student quoted the words of his father who kept repeating: 'I give you all I have and what I want from you are good results at school'. Parents' expectations of their children's academic success are a very important motivational factor mainly for all those good learners whose parents are used to their child getting good and very good school marks. The child consequently always tries to perform his/her best just to please those who are close to them.

The influence of peers on the individual students' level of motivation to learn is very significant, too. No student wants to be perceived to be a poor learner in the eyes of his/her teacher or classmates, as this often leads to the teenager's feeling a certain degree of alienation. This in turn may result in the student's frustration and decrease of his/her self-esteem, especially if the young person has not got very good grades in other subjects, either. Low self-assessment is a source of low self-esteem and the way that the students perceive themselves has great influence on their motivation to learn. Thus, if they do not get peer approval, their assessment is usually low, which makes their motivation to learn low as well,

and in consequence, the student's grades are poor. As can be seen, peer disapproval may trigger a chain reaction which may even result in the student's failure to learn the language.

However, the factor which influences students' motivation to learn most is their personal interest in English, which as a *lingua franca* is the language of music, culture, fashion and entertainment and these are the aspects of life that young people are most attracted to. Teenagers feel greatly encouraged to learn if they can use their practical knowledge of English in different real life situations. They feel the need to learn the language if its good command is what they require to meet their personal aims, especially those connected with their hobbies and pastimes. Puchta and Schratz (1993:4) observe that the teacher's inability to build bridges between what they want to teach and the student's worlds of thoughts and experience, i.e. inability to apply the language taught to the students' everyday interests is the main source of problems with motivating students to learn and keeping learning discipline.

Most students believe that when their expectations and needs are met in this area, they will manage to develop their language skills and be able to say that they have a good command of English. According to what they claim, the number of lessons a week and above all, the person of the teacher, are the two most important factors their learning success seems to depend on. What the teachers may find interesting to know, is the fact that most of their students perceive English to be relatively easy to learn. It is, however, hard to interpret what 'difficult to learn' might mean for the students. It may be presumed that the scale of difficulty is partly measured by the students by means of the grades they obtain: the better marks one gets, the easier s/he finds the foreign language to learn.

The students are aware of the fact that their marks could be better if only they worked harder and were more systematic in learning. Asked to enumerate the steps they could take in order to get better marks in English, none of the students mentioned changing school, or a teacher, which may mean that being secondary school learners they are mature enough to recognize that the source of their poor results may be found, not only in external factors influencing the learning process, but mainly in themselves, and more precisely in their lack of consistency or regularity in learning.

The main areas of difficulty for the students are the use of grammar, pronunciation and skills development, especially speaking skills. When looking for the source of these difficulties, it is possible to draw the conclusion that they may, to a certain degree, find reflection in the teacher's lack of language competence if we take into consideration that all of the teachers are Polish and not native speakers of English. Thus, in order to be able to identify

the source of their students' learning difficulties, the teachers need to self-reflect upon the areas of their own language competence and incompetence.

The research data demonstrates that among the types of activities that the students like to participate in best during lessons of English, those most frequently mentioned are watching videos (used by the teachers mainly to develop their students' listening skills) and playing language games, which the students perceive to be a very effective way of stimulating both their interest and motivation to learn the language. However, the data also shows that although the students find these two forms of work interesting, their teachers are not very willing to make use of them due to the fact they find them time-consuming and effort-demanding. One of the students involved in the project said:

> '*When we want to watch a video or do a project during a lesson our English teacher tells us that she has to go on with the new material. She claims that preparing such activities is very complicated as she has to find an appropriate film first and then prepare activities on the basis of the script and "organise" a classroom with a TV, which takes time'.*

Awareness of the students' preferences connected with students' groupings, the types of activities the students like best and their attitude to English as a school subject constitutes the background knowledge an English teacher needs to possess in order to interact effectively with his/her learners and to teach successfully. The students' perception of English as a foreign language which will contribute to their success in future life (e.g. they may get a satisfying job with a good knowledge of English) influences their attitude to it. This, in consequence, has an influence on the level of their motivation to learn the language. Similarly, the level of students' motivation depends also to some extent on the structure of a language group and more precisely on the place an individual student has in the group hierarchy. The role that the student plays in the group, i.e. whether a star or a follower, etc. is connected with his/her self-assessment and the ability to self-reflect upon one's own behaviour both as a member of a group and a FL learner.

2. The teachers (teacher questionnaire data)

2.1 Factors influencing teacher performance

2.1.1 Motivation to teach

The level of motivation to teach depends on many variables and it may be subject to change over time. More than half of the teachers participating in the project declare that they have stable motivation. They explain that the reason why their motivation remains at the same level is the conviction that they do their best to teach effectively, even if this does not always find its reflection in their students' results. What is more, they believe that they are generally good teachers who improve their teaching from lesson to lesson:

> '*I simply do my best but there are always ups and downs like in every other profession. I know it is like this and it helps me not to burn out.*'

One-third of the teachers claim that according to their observation, their motivation to work increases over time, mostly due to the fact that they continuously gain experience about how to teach better. This makes their self-assessment grow which, in consequence, makes them feel secure while teaching. There are also 13% of the teachers who claim that their engagement in teaching has decreased over time and during the interviews they stated that the main reason for such a situation was their students' attitude to learning English:

> *'When I see that whatever I do in the class is maliciously commented on by my students and that their results are poor even though I did my best to teach them well and to motivate them to work I feel like giving up the profession and taking up gardening'.*

This comment demonstrates how the teachers' motivation to teach is connected with the feedback they get from their students. Negative reactions of the learners and their unwillingness to co-operate with the teacher makes his/her motivation for work drop gradually. The reason behind the decrease in the teachers' motivation to teach is the fact that their affective needs, mainly the need to be understood and respected, are not satisfied, which according to Maslow (1970) influences an individual's and thus also each teacher's self-esteem.

2.1.2 Areas of competence and incompetence

When asked to identify areas of competence and incompetence in their teaching, the teachers give very diverse responses. According to the opinions expressed, almost two-thirds of them feel that they are good at:

- speaking English fluently (53%) - language competence
- classroom management (27%) - didactic competence

– building good rapport with students (30%) - social competence.

What is more, some of the teachers also stress the fact that they are patient towards the students and their immature behaviour (17%). A group constituting 23% of the teachers claim good knowledge of vocabulary to be their asset and 10% of the teachers perceive knowledge of culture of English-speaking countries to be their strength in language teaching. This shows that the teachers participating in the project represent different levels of skills which are necessary, or simply useful in teaching, and generally feel more competent as FL users than as managers of the teaching-learning process, or teacher-learner rapport builders. It is natural that the level of skills development varies depending on who the teacher is, as this is the result of his/her experience, qualifications and personality traits which constitute only a few of the psycho- and sociolinguistic factors involved in the teaching-learning process.

The teachers are convinced that their professional incompetences result from:

– lack of emotional distance in the interaction with students which makes it hard to assess their work objectively (40%),
– lack of experience (23%),
– inappropriate methodological preparation (17%),
– being too tolerant of some of the students' behaviour (10%).

Over one-third of the teachers find it hard to keep an emotional distance between them and the students, which has a negative influence on the objectivity of the evaluation of their students' work. It may be concluded that the teachers' emotional engagement in the interaction with the students may lead to over- or underestimating their learners' language performance. This emotional engagement depends on the quality of the rapport that the students have with their English teacher. If the teacher likes a particular student, s/he may be more lenient towards the student's misbehaviour than in the case when the teacher does not like him/her.

Many teachers also feel that they are not experienced enough to deal with different classroom situations. During the interviews they explained that they made many teaching decisions intuitively and assessed the effectiveness of these on the basis of the results obtained. Especially those teachers who had not worked at school for long admitted that they made most decisions concerning planning a course and managing the teaching-learning process using the 'trial and error' method.

To learn whether teachers' incompetences were identified by the students, the students were asked to indicate what could be done to raise the level of their satisfaction in the

language course and therefore in the teacher-learner interaction as well. What the students suggested that their English teachers could do to improve teaching was to:

- prepare lessons more appealing to students' interests (56%)
- use more films and music/songs to enliven the lesson (27%)
- prepare more pronunciation activities (15%)
- be more flexible in using the course-book (9%)
- prepare more activities facilitating communication (7%)
- keep more eye-contact with students while talking to them (2%).

It seems that in the suggestions that the students give they highlight both lesson planning and developing communication skills in the classroom. Comparing the areas of the teachers' weaknesses as viewed by themselves with their students' suggestions leads to the conclusion that there is a discrepancy between what the teachers perceive to be their weaknesses in teaching and the students' view of what needs to be improved in the teachers' way of conducting lessons. This demonstrates that in order to ensure more effective classroom discourse, the teachers need to be more aware of how their students evaluate the way they conduct lessons.

2.1.3 Teaching skills – teacher effort *vs* learning outcomes

Almost two-thirds of the teachers are satisfied with the results obtained by their learners, when they compare them with the effort they make in teaching. Only 16% of the teachers express the opinion that their students' learning outcomes are satisfactory or poor, or insufficient when compared with the effort they put into teaching process (Table 18).

Students' learning outcomes	Teachers' answers (%)
Very good	17
Good	63
Satisfactory	13
Poor	7

Table 18 Teacher perception of the learning results *vs* teacher effort

This shows that the teachers are generally satisfied with the language progress their students make and are convinced that their teaching is effective, as what they do in the classroom finds its reflection in the grades their students receive during the school year.
The arguments that the teachers give to support the conviction that their students' learning outcomes are compatible with the effort they make in teaching are:

1. the students' ability to use their language knowledge in practice:

   'When I can see how happy my students are being able to understand their English speaking 'chat' friend made by means of the Internet I am really satisfied'

2. the Matura exam results:

   'I did my best to teach my students English and luckily I can see it was worth working so hard. My students are happy about their Matura exam results and it makes me motivated to teach even better next year'.

Those teachers who conclude that their effort is much greater than the results obtained by their students claim that the reason for the poor outcomes of their students are:

1. multilevel groups:

   'I have never had a homogeneous group when it comes to the level of student language competence. In all the groups I teach the FL level ranges from false beginners to pre-intermediate students which makes teaching quite hard.'

2. too numerous language groups:

   '*I know that having 20 students in the language group makes teaching easier than having 35 students but still there are too many of them to be able to devote each the amount of time he/she requires'*.

3. lack of effort and work on the part of the students:

   'Many students are lazy. Even though most of them take their Matura exam in English, there is quite a big group of those who seem to forget about the fact for the first two years of their attending secondary schools. Then, one year before the Matura exam they want to catch up with everything.'

The above comments may suggest that the teachers do not take responsibility for their students' poor learning outcomes and look only for external sources of the students' learning problems. It may be hypothetised that these particular teachers do not self-reflect upon the rapport with their students on a regular basis as otherwise they would be able to notice that frequently they may effectively contribute to improving their students' learning outcomes by

not only identifying the sources of students' language difficulties but also helping the learners to overcome those difficulties.

2.1.4 Professional development

All the teachers admit that they engage in development activities mostly because it is required by the institution they work at (87%). Only 13% of them claim that they develop professionally mainly and above all to improve their teaching skills. Among the forms of development that they engage in, the most popular are participation in language workshops (77%) and conferences (20%). Six teachers state they are the members of IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) – the organisation that promotes professional development of EFL teachers. Half of the teachers also claim that they consult other FL teachers about matters concerning teaching (53%). The teachers also see their professional development in terms of reading appropriate source literature. The interviews reveal that the literature means mostly methodology books borrowed or sometimes bought to improve teaching. Six out of ten teachers who claim they read reference books are still completing their studies to obtain their M.A. degree. Only two teachers subscribe to a magazine for teachers - '*The Teacher'*, and only three state that they buy approximately one book written in English a year. Sometimes the teachers also read resource books in order to find materials which would make their lessons more interesting for their students. 37% of the teachers claim to do so regularly. The teachers also report to have quite a good knowledge of the latest course-books, thanks to the teacher-friendly policy of many course-book publishers, which quite often give or send teachers free copies of the books they release on the market.

Other forms of professional development which are, however, less popular among the teachers are self-monitoring of one's own classroom performance and observations of other teachers' lessons. 23% of the teachers claim that they observe classes conducted by their colleagues quite often, but they still prefer self-monitoring to peer observation. Only 10% of the teachers report that they come to their colleagues lessons to observe the way they work regularly. The interview data reveals that the teachers prefer to self-reflect upon their own lessons, rather than let others assess the way they teach, for the simple reason that they feel stressed that their colleagues might discover some areas of professional incompetence. This demonstrates that the teachers seem to be uncertain about their competence and that they are unaware that the teacher-supervisor's task is not to be critical but helpful to the 'observed' teacher. According to what Edge (1992) claims, after the peer observation visit, the teacher

conducting the lesson may expect that the teacher-observer will not interpret or judge the 'observed' teacher's classroom behaviour, but that s/he will just listen, try to understand and only give some suggestions. However, what the teachers participating in this project seem to anticipate from their colleagues is however not help, but only criticism.

As mentioned earlier, both self-monitoring and lesson observations conducted by other teachers are not very popular forms of professional development among the teachers participating in the project, mainly due to, as they claim, their lack of time to observe the lessons of their colleagues, or to reflect upon their own classroom performance. In fact, eleven teachers report in their interviews that they only self-monitor their own lessons if they experience some serious problems, for example, with keeping discipline in a lesson. In such a case they perceive monitoring to be a simple method for finding the source of the problem and eliminating it.

What is also significant is that only 10% of the teachers regularly ask their students for assessment of their teaching. Two teachers report that they ask for their students' assessment once a semester and one teacher does this approximately once a month. Unfortunately, a numerous group of teachers (70%) claim they ask for their students' opinions very rarely, or never. If we consider teaching as a profession in which teachers help their students develop by sharing knowledge with them, we may come to the conclusion that the rapport between the teachers and their student may be distorted as the teachers seem to be uninterested in the students' feedback on the teachers' classroom performance. If teachers do not regularly attempt at getting to know much what the level of satisfaction their students have from classroom learning, it may be hypothetised that the classroom interaction between those teachers and their students is not fully effective.

2.1.5 Teacher stress at work

The overwhelming majority of the teachers (93%) admit that the job they do is neither very stressful nor very relaxing. Only for two teachers is the job not stressful at all. Looking for an explanation for this perception, it may easily be noticed that because the teachers generally find satisfaction in their contacts with young people and they like what they do, they do not feel stressed at work.

It is obvious that different factors involved in school life create different levels of stress for different teachers. The factors which were found to be the most stressful were:

1. expectations of students, parents and the institution

2. teachers' own emotional engagement in students' successes and failures
3. the need to build their authority
4. dealing with disruptive behaviour

(The factors are presented here in the order of frequency of responses).

The main source of stress for the teachers appears to be the quality of the rapport that they have with the students, their parents, the peers and the school head, i.e. all the social groups that the teachers need to build positive rapport with in order to do their job successfully. This stress is connected with the teachers' authority and therefore, in a sense, with their sense of self-worth. All the measures that the teachers take to deal with difficult students and to cope with the criticism of their professionalism, or even their personalities prove to be very tiring, energy-consuming and stressful. As Appel (1995) indicates, apart from being stressful, teaching is also physically and mentally strenuous and therefore he advocates that teachers need to take care of their own state of mind and body to be able to manage classroom interaction effectively. The teachers also feel very stressed by the social pressure that is exerted on them. It is socially expected that they will behave according to public expectations, or otherwise they may be socially branded for their behaviour outside school.

The factors the teachers find least stressful are flexible working hours and the necessity to work and prepare for the lessons at home. 33% of the teachers hold the opinion that both factors mentioned above are the basic requirements of the teaching profession that even student-teachers know about and that they therefore should not be perceived as stressful. The teachers seem to understand that the two factors which are generally perceived to be 'inscribed' in their profession should not really be treated as potential stress sources, for the simple reason that they are thought to be 'natural elements' of school teaching that cannot be escaped or neglected.

The fact that the school principal dees not share responsibility for different decisions concerning school life with the teachers is not stressful at all for six teachers, working at the same school who, as they explain, are used to the situation. They are not allowed to be autonomous teachers as their principal is a very authoritarian person who feels a strong need to control every aspect of school life including each individual teacher's classroom performance.

Further analysis of the teachers' views demonstrates that both keeping discipline in the classroom and the constant need to raise qualifications are perceived by over one-third of them to be very stressful. It may be concluded that in the case of classroom discipline

problems, the teachers' level of stress depends on how experienced they are in dealing with misbehaving students. In the case of the constant need to develop professionally, the level of stress seems to depend to a great extent on the level of teachers' interest and engagement in teaching. For those teachers who are active and thus, constantly involved in exploring new and more effective methods of teaching, the need to raise qualifications seems to be a source of pleasure and satisfaction and not stress. For those teachers who have disciplined students and who have skills and knowledge which enable them to keep discipline in the classroom, dealing with disruptive behaviour is not a source of stress at all. However, as the data collected suggests none of the teachers perceive teaching to be a relaxing profession. It is seen by all of them to involve a certain level of stress which in the long term may be a source of professional burn-out. What Head and Taylor (1997) advise teachers to do in order to protect themselves from stress involved in teaching is to take care of their physical well-being by, e.g. using techniques for breathing and progressive relaxation to counteract possible burnout. Appel (1995:34) suggests that those teachers who find it really stressful to deal with students' misbehaviour should try to create 'breathing spaces' during lessons, i.e. to organise the lesson in such a way that students are given a task to solve on their own, while the teacher has some time to rest in order to avoid exhaustion as well as mental and physical strains.

2.2 Factors influencing teacher classroom performance – the questionnaire, interview and observation data

The focus of this part of the chapter is the presentation, analysis and comparison of the opinions expressed by the teachers in the questionnaires and the interviews with the views that their students expressed in the questionnaires and which concerned those aspects of the teachers' work and classroom behaviour which are believed to influence the classroom discourse. The teachers' and students' views that are compared here concern:

- teacher's personality
- teacher's authority,
- teacher's body language,
- teaching style and the roles a teacher plays in the classroom,
- assessment of students' work,
- ways of motivating students to learn,
- keeping discipline in the classroom.

Both the teachers' and the students' views concerning the aforementioned aspects are presented together with the data collected by means of the lesson observations in order to avoid unnecessary repetition and above all, to highlight the similarities and differences between the teachers', learners' and the observer's assessment of the teachers' classroom performance.

2.2.1 Teacher personality

The analysis of the research data shows that two-thirds of the teachers consider themselves to be people who are dynamic and of optimistic disposition. This according to the teachers greatly facilitates their work, as they believe that conducting lessons requires both a dynamic pace and a positive atmosphere in the classroom to ensure successful classroom discourse (Table 19).

Scale (1-5)	**1-not at all**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5- very much**
Feature	**Teachers (%)**				
1. dynamic	-	14	16	56	14
2. patient	-	-	-	74	26
3. cheerful	10	10	23	37	20
4. fair/objective	-	-	-	80	20
5. consistent	7	16	20	37	20
6. enthusiastic	-	23	14	23	40
7. understanding	7	16	7	27	43
8. demanding	13	10	27	10	40

Table 19 Personality features as viewed by the teachers

The responses gathered from the teachers indicate that they consider themselves to be objective in the way they treat students and evaluate their work. It may be concluded that the teachers feel responsible for the way they evaluate their students' language performance, being aware of the influence that their evaluation has on the students' self-confidence and their attitude to the teacher and the subject as well.

As can be noticed, more than one-third of the teachers (43%) claim to have problems with executing what they promise or threaten to do. However, on the basis of the classroom

observation data, it may be concluded that in reality, more than 43% of the teachers have problems with being consistent while interacting with learners. The learners' questionnaire responses seem to confirm this. The discrepancy here indicates that the teachers do not self-reflect upon their classroom behaviour regularly as otherwise, they would find it easier to assess how consistent they are more accurately. The classroom observations show that the teachers have a tendency to forget quite quickly about what they promised, or threatened to do when talking to the students. This, unfortunately, leads to inconsistency in their classroom behaviour which cannot and does not have a good influence on the rapport they have with their students. When informed about the results of the lesson observations, the teachers tried to explain that the main reason for their lack of consistency was the fact that they made many classroom decisions on the spot and being engaged in the process of teaching they sometimes forgot about some of their earlier decisions.

When it comes to enthusiasm in teaching, 40% of the teachers consider themselves to be very engaged in teaching, as opposed to 30% who think that this feature is not their asset. During the interviews the latter express the opinion that although their attitude to teaching is positive, they sometimes experience difficulties finding motivation within themselves that would 'give them power' to teach more effectively. Those teachers who think they are enthusiastic believe that this particular feature of their character helps them in teaching by providing them with creative ideas on how to be better teachers. It appears that enthusiasm is a very helpful feature of the teachers' personality which gives them 'positive energy' – as one of the teachers said, to deal with different, sometimes very difficult, classroom situations. What is more, according to what Harmer (2001) claims, teacher enthusiasm and energy constitute a powerful motivational tool for students, engaging them in the lesson and encouraging co-operation with their teacher.

More than two-thirds of the teachers participating in the research project think they have a lot of understanding for their students' mistakes and failures. Only 23% of the teachers hold the opinion that they are not very understanding. The students' questionnaire responses together with the interview data show that those understanding teachers do not have problems with building a good rapport with their students, as they are always more prone to empathize with the students in their school and life problems and to give them a chance to, for example improve their classroom behaviour or re-take a test.

The data collected reveals that over half of the teachers claim they are consistent and that they always do what they promise to do, as opposed to almost one-third who do not perceive consistency to be their asset. Interestingly, during the interviews, three teachers

explained that in their opinion this particular feature of character was not perceived by the students to contribute to successful classroom discourse. Thus, as those teachers claimed, they purposefully avoided 'being consistent' at any cost so as not to spoil the good rapport they had with their students. This demonstrates that some of the teachers possess knowledge, gathered on the basis of self-reflection, which lets them consciously avoid behaviours which lead to students' discontent and therefore less effective classroom discourse.

The confrontation of the teachers' responses with those provided by the students, show that the students' assessment of their teachers' personality and the opinions held by the teachers are generally quite similar and that there are only a few discrepancies which are connected with the following features of the teachers' personality:

a) Being dynamic- some of the teachers thought of themselves to be more dynamic than their students considered them to be; however in the case of four teachers this was the opposite: they thought of themselves as quiet teachers who preferred a slow pace of teaching, while their students considered the pace of teaching to be quite fast, yet appropriate for the lesson.

b) Being a good motivator: 37% of the teachers obtained from their students a higher number of points than they gave to themselves, while 20% of the teachers considered themselves to be better motivators than their students thought. Interviews with the teachers revealed that those who thought of themselves as poor motivators belonged to the group of teachers with the shortest teaching experience. It may therefore be concluded that although they were very enthusiastic about motivating students to learn, they were not yet very successful in doing so. One of the reasons for this could be inappropriate recognition of students' needs and expectations, resulting from lack of experience. As for those teachers whose motivational skills were assessed lower by their students than by themselves, they were all convinced they did their best to encourage students to work, and in the interviews they confessed they had not expected their learners to assess their efforts so low. Thus, it may be concluded that the reason for the discrepancy between the teachers' and the students' views is the same as in the case of the young teachers commented upon above. The reason is probably the teachers' unawareness of their students' needs which, in spite of the teachers' effort, leads to poor results in motivating the students to learn the FL.

c) Being consistent: 33% of all the teachers thought they were more consistent than their students' responses indicated, while the opinion of 6% of the teachers was just the contrary: they expressed the view that they were less consistent than their students

considered them to be. Both groups of teachers found their students' responses very surprising.

Trying to find the source of the discrepancy between their own and their students' opinions, 6% of the teachers concluded that the reason why their students considered them to be more consistent than they thought they were might have been the fact that, in spite of being friendly with their students and flexible in adjusting to their needs, they rarely changed their minds when it came to decisions made in the classroom.

On the other hand, those teachers who claimed to be rigid appeared to have a tendency to change their minds quickly and to forget about their threats and promises which made them ineffective in keeping order in the classroom.

The data collected shows that the teachers are aware of the fact that different features of their personality hinder effective teaching(Table 20).

Features	Teachers (%)
Being too empathic (i.e. having problems with keeping an emotional distance to student problems)	37
Inconsistency in decision making	27
Being chaotic and badly organised	23
Lack of flexibility in planning and conducting lessons	17
Being talkative	17
A tendency to be passive and apathetic	10

Table 20 Personality features impending teacher-learner interaction (the teachers' views)

The teachers express the opinion that what makes their professional life more complicated is the fact that they sometimes engage emotionally in their students' problems which, as a result, makes it sometimes difficult for them to be fully objective when assessing the students' work. Another feature which does not facilitate teaching is, according to 27% of the teachers, their inability to stick to all the decisions concerning the teaching-learning process which they make. A group of teachers (23%) admit that they are sometimes too chaotic and badly-organised which adversely affects teaching. However, at the same time, 17% of the teachers find lack of flexibility in planning and conducting the lesson to be their main professional problem. The same number of the teachers claim that they are too talkative

which makes their talking time in the classroom much more extensive than that of their students'.

The last feature which presents an obstacle to successful teaching, mentioned by 10% of the teachers, is their tendency to become passive and apathetic when they can not see that their students are progressing in learning the FL, i.e. that their marks do not improve. In the interviews the teachers explained that this lack of students' motivation to learn and the negative attitude to English that some of them have, which the teachers report to be so difficult to change, result in occasional periods of teachers' dissatisfaction with teaching. It may be concluded that it is the teachers' emotional engagement in their job, i.e. the fact that they feel dedicated to what they do, that is the reason why some of them react to students' lack of progress with visible apathy and passivity.

During the interviews some teachers tried really hard to show that although they were aware of the weaknesses they had they took different measures to solve the problems resulting from their imperfections, bad habits or simply those features of character which, although being unique to them as teachers, made their work difficult, such as, for example, absent-mindedness. They explained that they used different strategies to solve classroom problems, that they monitored their classroom behaviour to avoid unnecessary lesson breakdowns, or that they consulted other language teachers in cases when they experienced some teaching difficulties. Many teachers admitted, however, that participation in the research project was the first opportunity for them to think and talk about their behaviour as English teachers.

2.2.2 Teacher belief in their vocation to teach

The majority of the teachers (90%) think that teaching is their vocation and only 10% of them hold the opinion that the profession is not a good choice for them. Those who feel to be 'cut out' for the profession justify their opinion with the following arguments:

'*I like meeting new people and also teaching others and learning from them'*

'I like working with teenagers'

'I like sharing my knowledge by explaining things to others'

'I find it easy to establish good relationship with students'

'I am patient and tolerant as each teacher should be'

'Teaching is my passion; even when I am at home I wonder how I could improve my teaching'

'I get a lot of satisfaction from what I do'.

As can be concluded, most of the teachers belonging to this group derive pleasure from interacting with the young people with whom they regularly meet in the foreign language classroom. What is more, they seem to find personal fulfilment in what they do and they perceive teaching as giving them opportunities to develop their skill. For most of them, teaching is a source of well-being as it makes them feel young, creative and tolerant. In other words, it gives them the chance to reveal the positive side of their personality which contributes to their high self-esteem and gives them satisfaction in what they do for themselves and for others (the students).

Out of those teachers who do not think they have a vocation to teach only one made a comment saying:

> *'I don't feel particularly good at school and I know that I'm not a born teacher but re-qualifying to do something else in my life requires too much effort. Still, I am trying to do my best to teach well.'*

The students' opinions are almost identical with those of the teachers'. The majority of the students are convinced that the people who teach them English are 'the right people in the right place'- as one student commented. Only in the case of two teachers do the majority of their students express the opinion that they should not have started teaching at all, in both cases giving similar arguments to support their views. They claim that their English teacher:

- does not engage personally in teaching,
- does not care about motivating students to learn,
- does not make any effort to make the lesson more interesting,
- is often sad and indifferent to what is happening in the classroom.

These comments show that the students are sensitive to the teacher's behaviour in the classroom and can easily notice whether their teacher has a vocation to teach or not. Lack of engagement in teaching and lack of interest in the students' needs all create an overall view of the teacher as the person who should not work at school.

On the other hand, in the case of those teachers whom their students perceive to be 'born to teach, the most frequently appearing arguments supporting the view of the students were the following:

a. arguments concerning the teacher's skills:

- the teacher gives interesting lessons,
- the teacher uses a lot of strategies to motivate students

b. arguments concerning the teacher's personality:

- the teacher is able to communicate successfully with students,
- the teacher understands students' needs,
- the teacher has a gift for 'explaining grammar',
- the teachers is very patient,
- the teacher seems to like working with students.

The fact that the students' responses reflect so well the teachers' opinions about themselves as being 'cut out' to teach demonstrates that the students can easily recognize their teachers' attitude to the profession. The way their teacher speaks, looks or moves around the classroom all contribute to the students' overall impression of their FL teacher being the 'right person in the right place' or not. However, the students may sometimes be deceived by their teacher's behaviour, too.

Although one of the teachers is perceived by her students as born to teach, the interview data demonstrates that she is neither interested in teaching, nor in school life in general. She explains that teaching is for her only a way of earning a living and so to minimize the effort connected with doing the profession she gives students a lot of freedom in making decisions concerning the organisation of the course. They really appreciate that and think she is a representative of a democratic style of teaching. The teacher adds that it is her conscious decision to make the students responsible for making most teaching decisions instead of her. She explains that she wants them to do what they really want so that they will not feel bored in the class. The fact that she is a friendly person who has good rapport with her students may make the learners think she is a 'born teacher' although her opinion is quite different. This demonstrates that although generally students are very attentive 'observers', able to 'discover' the teachers' attitude to teaching on the basis of their behaviour, the teacher may be so successful in 'acting' a democratic teacher that the learners may not recognize that the style that she represents is *laissez-faire*, where the focus is not on developing their autonomy, but on shifting responsibility for the lesson content and conduct of it to them.

2.2.3 Teacher language competence and didactic skills

When assessing their own language skills, all of the teachers express the opinion that they speak English well and are able to use the language fluently in any classroom situation,

which seems to find its reflection in the observation data. It may be concluded that the teachers are aware of how skilful speakers of English they are and of how important role of a means of communication English plays in the classroom and in the world in general. The teachers' assessment of their ability to explain English grammar clearly is comparable to their evaluation of the speaking abilities as 90% of the teachers claim they are good at explaining grammar.

On the other hand, the ability to talk about the culture of English speaking countries in an interesting way is assessed quite low. Only 17% of the teachers claim that they are able to talk about the culture of English speaking countries in a way which the students find attractive and interesting. When asked about the reasons for such a low assessment, the teachers explain during the interviews that they generally do not remember much about the culture of the English speaking countries and have not had time to develop this knowledge since their graduation. One teacher commented: 'English through culture – I remember only bits and pieces and my knowledge is rather chaotic'. What is more, only a few teachers had a chance to spend some time in an English-speaking country and to experience life there. Talking about British and American customs and traditions only on the basis of theoretical knowledge is perceived by them to be dull and deprived of emotion as well as 'solid grounds' - as one teacher called it. The teachers feel that they are not able to answer some of their students' questions because 'one cannot learn everything from books and magazines'. This demonstrates that in order to raise the teachers' professional competence, there is an urgent need to give pre-service teachers an opportunity to participate in student mobility programmes to let them gain practical and not only theoretical knowledge of how people in the English speaking countries live. The second argument quite commonly used is connected with the teachers' belief that in order to speak about culture in an interesting way one has to be well prepared to be able to enrich what is being said with some visual or audio materials to help students understand and remember the information. One-third of the teachers claim that they simply have no time to look for any extra materials to make the lesson more appealing to the students' interests.

The teachers' evaluation of the abovementioned skills being so important in FL teaching only partly finds its reflection in the students' views. The students' evaluation of their teachers' speaking skills shows that in spite of different levels of language competence that the students represent, most of them assess the skills that their English teacher possess as high, which means that no matter what the teacher's abilities really are, s/he is able to create in the students' eyes the impression of being a skilful user of the language. Sample

observations indicate that the students' evaluation of their teacher's speaking skills was in most cases accurate as none of the teachers had any major problems conducting lessons in English.

The students' scoring is generally slightly lower when it comes to the assessment of the teachers' skills in explaining English grammar clearly, which so many language learners perceive to be crucial skills for a FL teacher. Although some of the students might have found it difficult to assess their teacher's speaking skills, as their knowledge of English is very basic, this is not the case with the assessment of grammar explanation skills that a foreign language teacher has. Depending on the level of students' language competence, grammar is explained to them mostly, partly or solely, in Polish in order to facilitate their understanding of the rules and usage. It is therefore much easier for the students to assess these skills than those mentioned earlier. The scoring given by the students indicates that they generally evaluate their teachers' skills to explain grammar clearly to be rather good. 47% of the teachers obtained four and 33% of them got three out of five points on the scale of these particular skills assessmenr. Only three teachers obtained the highest scoring on the scale of assessment from the students they taught.

The results obtained by the teachers are not bad when we compare them to the students' assessment of their teachers' skill to speak interestingly about the culture of English speaking countries. In this case, according to the students' opinions, only 17% of the teachers may be perceived as skilful knowledge-givers. During the interviews the teachers tried to explain the reasons for such poor evaluation of this particular skill by giving the following arguments: over half of them claimed that they were not able to speak interestingly about the culture of English speaking countries due to the fact they had not had their own 'hands-on' experiences as most of them had never been to any of those countries. They also stressed that the theoretical knowledge they possessed was fragmentary and often deprived of solid grounds. Therefore preparing a lesson devoted to teaching foreign language culture (TLC) they had to, in most cases, use the material presented in course-books which students used almost every lesson and therefore often found quite boring.

Teachers' evaluation of their students' progress has never been an easy task and the research data reveals that there are a lot of discrepancies in both the teachers' and the students' opinions concerning this aspect of the teaching-learning process. All of the teachers claim that the language knowledge the student possesses and presents in the classroom is the factor which plays the most important role when assessing his/her language performance. The teachers also express the view that a particular student's looks, the grades that s/he obtained

earlier in the school year as well as personal opinions that that the teacher holds about the student do not generally influence the mark that s/he receives.

Although the students generally agree with their teachers that 'what a student knows' is the most important criterion of evaluation, they also claim that the teachers, consciously or not, give better marks to those learners who, not being well prepared for the lesson, are able to direct teacher's attention to the topics they know more about or who simply 'keep talking a lot' no matter whether correctly or not. When asked, during the interviews, to comment upon their students' observations the teachers (especially those teaching in profiled secondary schools) agreed that the learners' ability to show their best was important when it came to the assessment of their language knowledge.

The students' views on the way that their English teachers assess their language performance indicates that what a teacher thinks about them as individuals and language learners influences, to some extent, their teachers' evaluation. The students notice that the teachers tend to 'label' them and assess their work on the basis of the label that each of them has acquired. When it comes to physical appearance, only a few students express the view that their looks influences the evaluation their English teacher gives them. This indicates that generally students' appearance is not a criterion which influences the assessment that they get from their teachers.

When it comes to the assessment of the teachers' didactic skills by the students, the evaluation the latter give is generally quite high. This means that the students perceive those who teach them English to be professionals who can speak the language fluently and are generally good at explaining grammar clearly. Out of the three skills the students were supposed to assess, the ability to speak about the culture of English speaking countries in an interesting way received the lowest assessment. The fact that the teachers' assessment of this particular skill finds its reflections in the students' assessment means that the teachers participating in the project generally have problems with presenting the culture of English speaking countries in a way that the students find both informative and interesting.

2.2.4 Level of satisfaction in teaching

The overwhelming majority of the teachers express the view that they like their job. The teachers' opinions expressed in questionnaires and interviews show that what they most appreciate about their profession is the opportunity to meet and work with young people (80%). Another reasons why the teachers like their profession is the fact that teaching gives

them a chance to develop themselves as people and professionals (17%) and gives them a sense of usefulness which directly and positively influences their self-confidence and contributes to theirwell-being (17%). Some of the teachers also see teaching as a chance to raise their self-confidence (13%).

Similarly to the teachers' responses, the majority of their students claim that their English teachers seem to like their job. They support their opinion with the observations that the teacher:

'is always prepared for the classes',

'knows what he/she wants to achieve',

'tries to give interesting lessons',

'*is deeply involved in the teaching-learning process and the relationship with students',*

'*explains grammatical material as many times as it is required',*

The opinions expressed by the students and the fact that they comply with the teachers' responses demonstrate that the learners are very good at discovering what the teachers really think about teaching. The view presented by Stefanović (1976) who claims that nothing a teacher does may be hidden from the students' eyes, seems to be a good proof of that. He states that although the teachers may try to hide certain emotions, attitudes and opinions, the students can easily notice, mainly on the basis of the teachers' body language, if those who teach them appreciate teaching or not. The conclusions formulated on the basis of the research data indicate that it would be beneficial for the classroom discourse if the teachers regularly self-reflected upon both their attitude to teaching and to their students as what they think appears to find its reflection in their classroom behaviour which the students are well capable of interpreting.

2.2.5 Authority building

2.2.5.1 Individual perception of teacher authority

Most of the teachers express the view that a teacher is perceived to be an authority by the students if s/he behaves in a way that the young people perceive to be worth imitating and following (73%). The opinion held by 40% of the teachers is that a teacher-authority is someone who is admired for the kind of a person s/he is. As can easily be concluded, the teacher-authority, in the sense that teachers understand it, is not strictly connected with how one teaches, but rather what kind of person one is and what his/her level of interaction skills is.

All the teachers claim that teacher-authority is always truly respected by the students, no matter what grades they obtain from him/her. 10% of the teachers also stress that in their understanding a teacher is an authority for students if s/he is able to discover each student's potential and enhance its development.

The students' perception of who a teacher authority is seems to be quite similar to that of the teachers'. The students also hold the opinion that a person who is an authority is the one who sets a good example and is therefore worth following. Many of them believe that a teacher-authority is the one who is personally engaged in what s/he does and takes responsibility for his/her work. Ruddock's (1984:6) study also gives evidence of similar views. She explains that taking responsibility for teaching means being a reflective practitioner who constantly monitors and analyses his/her classroom performance but also cares about each individual learner and tries to build good rapport with him/her. The students give the following definitions of teacher-authority:

'A teacher is perceived to be an authority if s/he sets a good example and behaves in a way that is worth imitating in all situations both in and outside the classroom'

' It is a teacher who treats students like partners and not as subjects to look down on'

' A teacher is an authority if he or she respects our individuality, makes an effort to learn who we really are and believes in us'.

The data reveals teachers' unawareness of the opinions that their students hold about them. When asked whether their students perceive them to be an authority, 70% of the teachers are unable to give either a positive or a negative answer:

'*Students generally do not have any authorities so teachers cannot be their authorities as well*' (17%),

'Many students perceive teachers to be their enemies rather than friends' (10%),

'I have never thought of that question before' (43%),

'I have never received any oral or verbal hints from my students whether they consider me to be an authority for them or not' (40%).

Only one-third of the teachers is convinced that they are perceived as authority because their students directly admitted this and also because this is what the teachers concluded on the basis of the observations of their students' behaviour:

'I have been teaching English for 11 years now and I have always been doing my best to do the job well. I know that students appreciate my efforts especially

that I already experienced a few situations when my ex-students came to me saying that I was the teacher they liked and respected most'.

The teachers' lack of awareness of their students' opinions seems to be surprising in the light of the students' views. The majority of the students claim that their English teachers are an authority for them. It may be hypothetised that the teachers are unable to state whether they are considered to be an authority, as they do not reflect regularly upon the quality of a raport with the learners. If they did, they would be aware of their students' opinions as they would be reflected in the students' attitude to the teacher in the classroom. On the basis of the interviews with the teachers it may also be concluded that the possible explanation for the teachers' unawareness may be the fear that some of them may expereience to think of themselves as being an authority for the students. The source of this fear may be the fact that the image of a teacher-authority that many of the teachers have is very much idealised by themwhich frequently has its grounds in their own learning history.

The teachers use many different strategies to build a positive picture of themselves in their students' eyes. The most popular of these strategies is showing understanding for different problems that the students experience in and also outside school (Table 21)

Strategy	Teachers (%)
Showing understanding for the student's problems	50
Always being prepared for the classes	43
Motivating students to learn	37
Being consistent and decisive	30
Collecting information about each individual learner	20

Table 21 The strategies used by the teachers to build their authority

The teachers are also aware of the fact that they cannot be respected for how they teach if they are badly-organised and do not really know what to do during the lesson (43%). They also express the opinion that in order to build their authority, they always try to be consistent and decisive in all classroom situations concerning both the students' behaviour and teaching in general. They seem to understand that although young people need some freedom to develop as autonomous learners, they simultaneously expect teachers to make some decisions concerning the teaching-learning process without consulting them. The teachers also claim that the fact they motivate students to learn contributes to the students' perception of their English teacher as an authority. The teachers explain that they are aware of the fact that adolescence is a difficult period in a young person's life and they do their best to assure

students that they can always count on their teacher in both school and life situations. In order to build a good rapport with the students, 20% of the teachers try to learn as much as possible about the students' private lives, family background, hobbies, etc. In order to collect this kind of information, those teachers mainly talk with the students during school breaks and during class discussions devoted to related topics.

The students' opinions concerning the strategies used by the teachers to build their authority generally reflect the teachers' views. According to the students, the most common strategies are:

a. trying to be friendly and get on well with the students:
'She always smiles and cares about our mood in the classroom'
b. setting a good example, e.g. being always prepared, systematic and consistent: *'She is always prepared for the classes so I am ashamed to come to the classroom unprepared'*
c. motivating students to work both verbally and non-verbally: *'He constantly tries to show us that what we have learned may be practically applied in our lives now and in the future'.*

While being interviewed many teachers stress that in their opinion, being liked by the students and being perceived as authority by them does not necessarily have to mean the same thing. Their observations seem to indicate that there are teachers whom their students like, but who at the same time find it difficult to carry out a lesson plan as their students do what they want in the classroomknowing that the teacher will not do anything to hurt or upset them not to 'spoil the good rapport' they have. As a consequence of such 'only friendly' behaviour, the teacher's classroom management is ineffective. Students do not feel obliged to follow the teacher-friend's instruction which, in consequence, has a negative influence on the students' motivation to learn. On the other hand, there are also teachers whom the students respect highly and are often afraid of, but the rapport they have is not very good because the teachers politely but firmly keep their students at bay. It is worth explaining that the most effective in building authority in the students' eyes were those teachers who were really dedicated to teaching and who showed a positive attitude to all students but never let the latter manipulate them.

2.2.5.2 The level of stress in the classroom

All the teachers seem to be aware that a high level of stress does not exert good influence on the teaching-learning process and therefore, they try to avoid making their students unnecessarily stressed. Thus, 57% of the teachers claim that stress resulting from anxiety rarely accompany their lessons and if it appears, it is in most cases connected with testing the students' knowledge of English, or keeping discipline in the classroom. Those teachers emphasized during the interviews that the end of a school term was the most stressful time for their students as it was then when some of them finally 'woke up' and realised that they were in danger of failure if they did not start working:

'I hate the end of semester evaluation of students' language progress. The students are usually stressed, irritated and annoyed and I often start feeling the same, too'.

Only two teachers report that the level of stress during the lessons they conduct is often high. When asked to explain what the source of the stress is, the teachers claim that in their opinion it is the fact that they re reserved and strict by nature, which might be the reason why their students are afraid of them. The data shows that except for the two teachers who claim that their personality is the main reason for making the lessons stressful for the students, the rest of the teachers make an attempt to limit to a minimum the situations in which their students can feel stressed. During the interviews 30% of the teachers admit that it is their teaching experience which 'taught' them that stressful lessons usually make students timid and withdrawn:

> *I know from my classroom observations that whenever the level of stress in the lesson reaches certain level, my students are unable to work or even look and speak to me. They just sit silently and avoid eye contact*.

As can be concluded, classroom stress usually results in the students' unwillingness to co-operate with both the teacher and peers.

In the case of frequent occurrence of high levels of stress in the foreign language classroom, the teachers' and the students' responses differ quite often, but the difference is never so great as to be perceived as surprising or shocking. Generally, most students think that a high anxiety level is rarely introduced in their English classes and mostly in the case of written and oral testing. In the case of three teachers, the majority of the students who assessed their classroom performance claim that the atmosphere that those teachers create in their classrooms is very often stressful, although each of the teachers holds the opinion that their lessons are generally not stressful for the learners. However, lesson observations seem to confirm the students' view. When conducting the lesson the three teachers are very strict and reserved when addressing the students, which makes them feel stressed. The teachers appear

to be unaware of this fact. On the other hand, 17% of the teachers think that their students feel more stressed during lessons than they really are. During the interviews the teachers explain that their students are often passive and withdrawn which, they thind, are signs of anxiety. However, the students' responses show that they do not respect their English teachers much and that their classroom behaviour is a result of their boredom and discontent with the lesson conduct:

> *I don't mind learning English but the teacher never prepares interesting lessons. They are usually pretty boring and therefore make me sleepy. Sometimes I feel annoyed that I have to sit in the classroom instead of doing something more exciting.*

As can be concluded, the reason for poor classroom interaction may be wrong assumptions that the teacher makes about his/her learners on the basis of insufficient classroom observations.

2.2.5.3 Favouritism

Over two-thirds of the teachers admit they have a favourite student or students among those they teach. At the same time, however, all of the teachers mentioned state that they never let their students feel that they like some of their classmates more. Only 25% of the teachers claim that they never treat their students partially. However, what the students think is that each of the thirty teachers favours some student(s). In the case of 80% of the teachers there are more than five students in each language group they teach convinced that others get more attention on the part of the teacher, are smiled at and nominated to speak more frequently than others. When it comes to those teachers who claim they do not treat any student partially, there is in each case one or two learners in the language group who think that that teacher treats some of their classmates better. The teachers found these views surprising as none of them expected that there were learners among those they taught who might have thought that some of their peers were favoured: 'I would never expect that some of my students felt less liked than their classmates. I never meant to treat any of my students partially'.

Two of the teachers admit, however, that they nominate the best students to speak more often than others. Their justification of this is that the level of language competence in most language groups they teach is generally very low and that the students are not very willing to answer their questions: 'I know that some students speak in the classroom more than others but if they didn't speak, I would have to answer the questions I asked myself'.

The observation visits show that there are students in those groups who are more active than the others and who answer teachers' questions without even waiting to be nominated. It may be concluded that they are the students considered by some to be the teacher's 'pets' although the teachers' behaviour does not indicate this.

The students' responses indicate that they are very good observers, who are highly sensitive to both verbal and also non-verbal signals that their teachers send to them, especially if those are addressed to only one or two students in a language group. However, the data shows that although the teachers may try to hide from their students the fact that they like someone more than the others, the learners will quickly discover this. What is more, it may be concluded that if some students' self-evaluation is low, they may tend to misinterpret the behaviour of their teachers and purposefully look for signals of favouritism:

> *I have a student in one of the language groups I teach who seems to be jealous of every look and smile not directed to her! I feel that what she expects from me is my constant attention to her*.

It is therefore the teachers' task to reflect upon their behaviour in the classroom more with respect to the way they address students verbally and non-verbally in order to eliminate those factors which may make the students feel worse liked less than others. Nominating one student more than his/her peers, using diminutive address forms of only some students' names, smiling at and expressing approval of some students' work more frequently than the others is therefore better avoided.

2.2.5.4 Building authority by the teachers - summary

The analysis of the questionnaire and the interview data reveals that both the teachers' and the students' understanding of the expression 'being an authority for students' is quite similar. A teacher-authority is usually defined as a person whose attitudes to profession and to other people that s/he interacts with are well worth following as s/he respects others and is therefore respected as well.

Similarly to the teachers, the students also admit that their teachers do make an effort to become an authority. However, although both groups of the subjects agree that the teachers try to build their authority in the students' eyes, two-thirds of the teachers are not able to say to what degree they may be perceived to be an authority for their students mainly due to, as they call it, 'lack of verbal and non-verbal feedback from the students'. However, it is more probable that this is due to insufficient observation of the students' classroom behaviour and

lack of openness to them in the classroom interaction that may be the reason for the teachers' lack of awareness. Although many students do not achieve very good results in learning English, they claim that they appreciate highly the efforts that their teachers make to motivate them to work, explain the new language material and build a good rapport: 'I respect my English teacher for all the effort she puts in teaching us. I appreciate the patience and understanding she has to each individual learner'.

A similarity may be observed between the teachers' and the learners' responses concerning the perception of the strategies that the teachers use to build their authority. In enumerating the strategies, both the teachers and the students pay attention to the teachers' endeavours to ensure effective classroom interaction. However, an interesting observation is that although the students perceive their teachers' effort to build authority as effective and are unable to give any negative examples of the teachers' 'building authority campaign ', they give their English teachers relatively low evaluation when it comes to indicating to what degree the latter are an authority for them. Only 30% of the teachers are assessed quite highly - they obtain 4 out of 5 points on the scale of assessment. The data shows that only 10% of the teachers obtain the highest scores from their students. This contradiction observed in the students' views may mean that the rest of the teachers simply does not meet their students' expectations of who a 'teacher-authority' should be. The fact that most of the students are convinced that their English teacher likes their job and is dedicated to teaching does not reflect their relatively low scoring of that teacher as their authority as well. The data may suggest that whether a teacher gets the status of being a 'real authority' for the students or not, is not so much connected with what s/he does to build the authority, but rather if his/her personality and general attitude to teaching and life are appreciated by the students or not.

The responses that the teachers provided to the questions concerning favouritism reveal that they believe there is nothing wrong with liking some students more than others taking into consideration that they are being human beings not without feelings or emotions, provided that they treat all the students in the classroom in the same way:

> *Of course, I like some students more than others and I think this is natural. Those with a good sense of humour have always been my pet favourites as this is the feature which I really appreciate in people. (...)The fact that I like some students more than the others does not mean that I show it in any way in the classroom or even outside school.*

However, the students' and the teachers' opinions differ here: the students are very sensitive when it comes to the way their teacher perceives them as individuals and they easily notice that some students are treated differently even if the teacher tries to hide this or simply does not notice that fact. Such seemingly unimportant details as looking at and smiling at some students more often than at the others are, as it seems, very important to some learners as they are believed to demonstrate the teachers' attitude to those who are 'more smiled or looked at'.

2.2.6 Teaching styles and teacher roles played in the classroom

A particular teacher's choice of strategies used to build his/her authority in the classroom is strictly connected with the style of teaching the teacher represents, as different styles require him/her to adopt different behavioural patterns, and therefore different strategies, in approaching the learners.

The most popular teaching styles the teachers claim to represent are consultative and democratic styles. All of the teachers state both in the questionnaires and the interviews that they are open to students' ideas and interested in what they want to say, but most teachers prefer to make final decisions themselves rather than agree to accept their students' ideas.

23% of the teachers, all of them female, admit that they have a tendency to behave like mothers to their students and treat them with care and affection: 'I am a warm-hearted person and my students are as important for me as my own children, especially that they are teenagers, too.' 7% of the teachers report that in some cases they have a tendency to behave like authoritarian teachers. When asked to explain what the particular cases are, the teachers state that in most situations, it is their students' bad behaviour that is responsible for the way they address them and conduct the lesson:

> *I want to share with my students responsibility for the teaching-learning process. However, when they misbehave I need to behave like an authoritarian teacher because when I am strict it is easier to discipline them.*

One of those teachers also says: 'My classroom is the only place where I can be the boss because my students know much less than me. And I really feel like the boss.' The observations of this teacher's lessons reveal that he does not have a high level of self-confidence and therefore treats the roles of a knowledge-giver and a manager as good ways of

showing superiority to the students. This certainly makes him the sole decision-maker and certainly an authoritarian teacher in the negative sense of the word.

All of the teachers state that they are definitely not representatives of *laissez-faire* style of teaching. It may be concluded that they feel personally responsible for the students and their progress, as expressed by one teacher in his comments:

> *I feel fully responsible for everything which happens in my classroom from teaching and learning English to my students' drawing hearts and the initials of their beloved on the school benches.*

The English teacher's teaching style which, according to Wysocka (2003) is a relatively stable feature developing over a period of time, is generally not difficult for the students to recognize or for the teachers to label (Table 22).

Styles	**Teachers (%)**	**Students (%)**
Consultative	37	44
Authoritarian	7	23
Paternal	23	13
Democratic	33	13
Laissez-faire	-	7

Table 22 Teacher teaching styles as perceived by the teachers and their students

As the collected data indicates, more than half of the teachers are classified by their students as having either consultative or democratic styles of teaching. At the same time, these are the styles of teaching of which the students approve. The fact that more teachers are classified as the representatives of consultative rather than democratic style suggests that the teachers may be afraid, not prepared or simply unwilling to give more freedom to the students when it comes to making decisions concerning the teaching-learning process which is characteristic of democratic style of teaching. A group constituting 23% of the teachers is classified as representing the authoritarian style of teaching. Surprisingly, only 7% of the teachers claim that this particular style of teaching is characteristic of them. The explanation for the discrepancy may be the fact that any form of authoritarian behaviour on the part of the teacher always casts some shadow on the teacher's attempt to be more learner-friendly. Even those teachers who claim that they only sometimes behave like authoritarian teachers are

classified by many of their students as the representatives of this particular style. Students are very sensitive to all sorts of authoritarian behaviour that the teachers have and they mostly perceive them as hostile. The interviews with the teachers reveal that 14% of them are the types of people with strong personalities who feel responsible for all aspects of the teaching-learning process and who think that their students do 'not have enough experience' to decide about what was best for them.

Out of 23% of the teachers holding the opinion that they are representatives of paternal style of teaching, in their students' opinion only 13% of them are 'paternal' teachers. The other teachers are qualified to represent either consultative (43%) or *laissez-faire* style (7%).

Those teachers who think that they have consultative style of teaching and who in their students' opinions represent authoritarian style, explain in the interviews that their classroom behaviour results from fear of losing control over the teaching-learning process if they let students make autonomous decisions. Those teachers are not confident enough of their didactic and management skills and are afraid they will 'lose face' if they consult most teaching decisions with the students. They therefore consult with their students only some decisions. They claim that making students follow the teachers' instructions in the classroom makes it easy to control the group and is a successful 'repellent'- as one teacher called it, for all sorts of students' questions.

Interestingly, the interview also shows that two teachers who think of themselves as having a good rapport with the students are, according to their learners' opinions, representatives of *laissez-faire* style, as they let their students make most classroom decisions believing that 'they know best what is good for them', which in reality means no learning take place at all. It needs to be stressed that the students do not approve of their teachers' style:

> *He is a nice and friendly person but a horrible teacher. We do not learn much at his lessons.(...) Although I like him I think he is a poor teacher. He lets the group control most of the classroom decisions which means almost no teaching and therefore learning as well.*

It shows that although the students appreciate their teacher's effort to make them feel good in the classroom, they expect from him/her to manage the teaching-learning process and to teach.

Teachers are required to take up many different roles during one lesson to make teaching-learning process effective. The choice of these generally depends on the approach a particular teacher has to teaching, for example whether it is a teacher centred (TCC) or a learner centred classroom (LCC) that they believe is the most effective environment for

teaching a foreign language. Some of the roles are also usually determined by the stage of the lesson, e.g. in a presentation stage a teacher is a knowledge-giver but teachers' perception of how often they play certain roles during a lesson is very individual. The data reveals that the role played by the teachers most frequently in their English classrooms is that of a needs analyst. One teacher commened: 'I can only be a successful teacher if I know what my students already know and what they need to know'. This demonstrates that the teachers are aware of the importance to recognize their students' needs accurately as they believe it is the key to both successful teaching and effective classroom communication. Other roles that are frequently played by the teachers during FL lessons are those of knowledge-giver, controller of the students' work and finally, that of attentive listener. It is easy to explain why these three roles are used most frequently if we take into consideration that their choice by the teacher is strictly connected with the nature of the teaching-learning process. The teacher shares with students new information and controls how they try to use it in practice, and then s/he listens to the students' responses to the comprehension questions that were asked.

In the teachers' perception of the other roles that they take in the classroom, two roles seem to be of similar importance: that of motivator and helper, which again is not surprising as these roles complement each other. The teacher helps students to overcome language problems and this way s/he motivates them to progress in their language learning. And finally, the teachers see themselves as assessors evaluating their students' work and as negotiators and organisers of the teaching-learning process.

According to the students' view, the teachers are perceived as playing the role of facilitators making it easier for the students to learn a new language even more frequently than that of knowledge-givers. The discrepancy in the teachers' and the students' perceptions of the most common roles played in the classroom may be due to the fact that according to the teachers their prime aim in teaching is imparting knowledge. From the students' perspective, presentation of the new material is just one stage of the lesson, and for the rest of the lesson time a teacher helps them to understand the new part of the language material.

The data shows that another role that is thought by the students to be very frequently played by their English teachers in the classroom is that of negotiator willing to make decisions concerning the teaching-learning process together with the students. If we take into consideration that the majority of the students perceive their English teacher to represent either a consultative, or a democratic style of teaching, we will understand how much they appreciate the fact that the teacher is open to their opinions and suggestions:

Our teacher negotiates most of the classroom decisions with us: from the date of the test to the number of exercises to be done as homework. (...) She does not impose her will on us but always wants to know our opinions. We make all the decisions together.

Other roles that the teachers play in the classroom which are, according to the students, less popular than that of negotiator, are those of motivator and assessor of the students' work, followed by the roles of controller, manager of the teaching-learning process and finally that of attentive listener.

When comparing the teachers' and the students' hierarchy of importance of the roles played in the classroom, we can notice that the teachers, more frequently than the students, see themselves as assessors of their learners' work and progress. The explanation for this discrepancy may be found in the interview data, which shows that at many different moments of the lesson the teachers evaluate their students' work without verbalising their evaluation. The students know only their English teacher's final decisions concerning their evaluation in the form of the grade obtained, but are not aware that almost every language performance they make is assessed by the teacher and influences the overall opinion s/he has of a particular learner.

As for the differences in the perception that the teachers and the students have about the roles that are played by the teachers in the classroom most frequently, the teachers see themselves to be above all, knowledge givers, while the students see them more often as helpers, i.e. facilitators of the learning process. The discrepancy is easy to understand taking into consideration the different points of view concerning the teaching-learning process that both the teachers and the learners have. In the students' opinion, the teachers spend more time helping them to understand the new material than presenting it. The teachers hold the opinion that even when they help the students to understand the new language material they are still sharing their knowledge.

2.2.7 Non-verbal behaviour in the classroom context

2.2.7.1 Teacher body language

Classroom interaction is based not only on the verbal, but also the non-verbal channel of communication, with body language being a significant means of expressing thoughts, ideas and feelings.

However, when it comes to the teachers' body language, the collected data shows that there are very few gestures and facial expressions that the teachers are aware of using in the classroom. This may mean that for most of the lesson time they are so absorbed with teaching, that they do not pay attention to their body language. The teachers' unawareness may also indicate that they do not reflect much upon their classroom behaviour as otherwise they would be able to enlist more gestures and facial expressions that they use and even state in what learning situations they use them.

When asked if they consider themselves to be 'gesture' people or not, 50% of the teachers answer that they think of themselves to be rather verbal, while 37% admit that they use gestures a lot. The lesson observations confirm that the teachers' assessment in this respect is objective and that the teachers' perception of being a 'gesture' person is closely connected with the type of personality they represent. Very social, outgoing and talkative teachers use a lot of gestures as if they tried to explain or 'reinforce' the meaning of what they are saying with their hands and even the whole of body.

The teachers admit to using gestures consciously mostly in three situations:

d. to explain things to students (76%)
e. to give them encouragement and approval (68%)
f. to correct and discipline students (55%).

According to the teachers, the most popular gestures and facial expressions used in the classroom are:

- 'drawing' things with hands in the air and pointing at things – to help students understand the meaning of a new word and to avoid translating it into Polish
- 'counting fingers' - to facilitate learning numbers, days of the week and months
- miming actions with the whole body - to explain the meaning of, e.g. action verbs
- making 'faces' - to express feelings and emotions

(All the gestures and facial expressions are listed from those most to those least frequently used by the teachers).

To give students encouragement and express approval during lessons the teachers often clap their hands, show the 'O.K' sign with their thumbs, move a hand to express 'Keep going', nod their heads and smile (almost all teachers claim that they use the strategy often, or very often).

To correct students' mistakes and to bring back order and discipline at moments when the students stop paying attention to what their teacher says or does, the teachers use the following gestures and facial expressions are employed:

- shaking the head
- shaking a hand (to stop students' off-task conversations)
- putting a hand up
- shaking an index finger which means 'no' or 'wrong'

To raise the teachers' awareness of how important their classroom behaviour is for maintaining students' motivation in a lesson, the students were asked to respond how much the teachers' body language influenced their level of interest in the lesson. According to the responses given, for almost two-thirds of them the influence is tremendous, while for 28% of them it is moderate. Only 5% believe that the teacher's body language has only little influence on their motivation to learn. One student commented: 'If a lesson is interesting, I pay attention to it no matter what my teacher does, but if it is not, he may even stand on his head but I will not move one finger to react to that'.

When asked to reflect upon their English teachers' body language, the students proved to be much better observers than the teachers themselves. The teachers could enumerate only a few of the facial expressions, gestures and body movements they used in the lesson, whereas the students' list of those was much more extensive (Table 23). The interview data shows that the teachers very rarely reflect upon their classroom behaviour. They do reflect upon the use of body language when, for example, they want to explain the meaning of some English word without making use of the verbal channel of communication. This fact may explain the small number of examples of the body language use listed by the teachers. Although the students generally do not focus on their teachers' non-verbal behaviour consciously, during their lessons they are more exposed to it and thus they are able to present more examples of such a behaviour, especially that in the traditional, teacher-centred classrooms, typical of Polish schools, the students are more frequently listeners and observers than active participants in the lesson.

The teachers' body language in the classroom	
Hands and shoulders	– pointing at things and at students with a finger, – 'drawing' pictures with hands to facilitate understanding, – shaking an index finger meaning 'Do not do it',

	– thumb-up (which means o.k.), – clapping hands, – counting fingers, – waving a hand (which means: 'Goodbye'), – shaking, nodding the head, – shrugging shoulders (which means: 'Sorry, but I don't know'),
Head and face	– clearing throat (which means: 'Quiet, please'), – flaring nostrils (to express anger, fury, frustration), – eye winking (which means o.k.) – frowning forehead, – lip-pouting (to express dissatisfaction) – grinning (to express content and happiness), – lip grimace (to express discontent), – lip compression (which means: 'I am angry with you'), – frowning brows (anger), – lifting brows (surprise, disbelief), – smiling (usually when something funny happens in a lesson, when a teacher enters the classroom and greets students, when a student answers a teacher's question correctly, when a teacher is in a good mood).

Table 23 Teacher body language in the classroom as observed by the students

During the interviews, 87% of the teachers admitted that when filling in the questionnaires they had thought about the influence that their body language had on their students for the first time. Some teachers found the fact that their body language significantly influenced their students' interest in the lesson very surprising. They did not expect that their students would be able to present such an impressive list of facial expressions, gestures and body movements that the teachers used during lessons. Lesson observations made it easy to identify those teachers who were 'gesture' people and those who were 'static' as their body language was perfectly reflected in their students' questionnaire responses. This shows once again that the students are very good observers of all the aspects of their teacher's classroom behaviour which, depending on their individual preferences, may have either a positive or a negative influence on their rapport with the teacher.

2.2.7.2 Teacher mobility

Changing the physical position in the classroom, which constitutes one of the aspects of the teacher's non-verbal behaviour, cannot be underestimated in determining factors influencing classroom interaction. Whether, for example, the teacher prefers moving around the classroom to standing still near the blackboard is for the students a signal that informs them not only of the teachers' personality, self-esteem and even his/her mood but also of the role which is about to be 'performed' by the teacher.

As the data reveals, the teachers like to monitor and control their students' work best when they walk around the classroom. They also quite like the frontal position (50%) and finally, the least preferred position is sitting at their desk. When asked about how their mobility in the classroom changes during a lesson, the teachers respond by describing some, and in reality quite similar, routine procedures. They claim that they usually sit at the desk at the very beginning of the lesson just to check attendance, write down the topic of the classes in the school register and to test some students' preparation for the classes. The teachers admit that they stand beside, or in front of the blackboard mainly when they present new material, e.g. explain grammar or write new words and phrases on the board.

During the next two stages of the lesson - the controlled and the free practice stage, most teachers report that they walk around the classroom monitoring their students' work and taking the roles of expert, helper and controller. The teachers also claim that moving around the classroom is a good way of keeping discipline, especially when the students work in groups or pairs. Three teachers expand the list of the 'teacher's classroom positions' adding one more position, i.e. standing at the back of the classroom, claiming that it is especially useful when their students are taking a test as it helps them to control the students' behaviour quite effectively. Thus, it may be concluded that what the teachers perceive to be the main function of the above mentioned 'positions' is assuring the students of the teacher's full control over the classroom interaction and the teaching-learning process. This is intended to reassure the students that the teacher is ready to help them any moment they need it and to prevent any discipline problems.

When asked to comment upon the influence of the three positions that the teachers take in the classroom i.e. sitting at the desk, standing at the board and walking around the classroom on the students' behaviour and the way they feel during lessons, the students respond that the position which they prefer the least is when the teacher walks around the classroom, because:

'I feel stressed that he may discover I don't do exercises he asks us to do because I don't understand much of what he talks about'

'I feel anxious when she is close to me'

'I have the impression that she controls my every movement'.

There are also some students who claim that this 'body location' has a positive influence on the way they behave in the classroom because they:

- feel more anxious about teacher's reactions and therefore are quiet,
- can always ask for the teacher's assistance without disrupting others,
- have the feeling that everything is under teacher's control,
- are more concentrated on work as otherwise the teacher could easily see they were doing something else.

It appears that the students appreciate it more when their teacher stands at the board rather than sits at the desk. The frontal position of the teacher means for most of the students that the lesson is in progress and that the teacher is at the stage of explaining new material. As opposed to sitting at the desk, the teacher's standing position is claimed by the students to be 'safer', because in such a situation it is mostly the teacher who 'performs' while students only sit and listen. However, a teacher sitting at the desk is associated by 67% of the students with the one who nominates individual learners to show homework, respond to his/her questions, read a text from the course-book, etc., which is very often connected with the teacher's assessment of learners' performance and writing marks in the school register. The remaining group of students (33%) claim that when the teacher sits at the desk they feel good because, as one student commented: 'She [the teacher] can well control the whole group but cannot see what I write and if it is correct or not. My writing book is my business'.

As for the frequency of use of the three aforementioned body oppositions, it turns out that according to the students' observations the frontal position is the most frequent of all (53%). The next popular position is sitting at the desk (32%) and finally, walking around the classroom is the least common for teachers (15%).

2.2.7.3 Keeping eye contact with learners

Most of the teachers (90%) are convinced that keeping eye contact with a learner is important for building good rapport as according to the teachers' opinions it helps:

- to create a relationship of trust and openness (63%),

- to establish emotional contact (57%),
- to express teachers' interest in the student as an individual (44%),
- to create space for mutual understanding (26%),
- to express respect (16%),
- to check the particular student's level of understanding of the new material (8%).

When asked to assess the frequency of keeping eye contact with their learners half of the teachers claim that during the lesson they always keep eye contact with the student they talk to. There was not a single teacher who claimed s/he did not do this at all while one-third of them claimed that they did so frequently.

For the majority of the students (92%) it is very important that the teacher keeps eye contact with them when they speak. They state:

When my English teacher looks at me…

'*I know he/she is listening to me',*

'I try harder',

'I understand new language material better',

'I know he is interested in what I want to say',

'I know she respects me and my opinions',

'I know he speaks to me and not to anybody else',

'*I have the impression she/he understands me or at least pretends to understand'.*

It seems that eye-contact with the teacher gives the students a sense of security and helps them to overcome the inhibitions connected with speaking a foreign language and speaking in front of the class in general. Keeping eye contact makes it possible for the teacher to express both his/her approval, as well as interest in what a particular student says which stimulates learners' motivation. 3% of the students claim that they do not like it when their teacher keeps eye contact with them mainly because they are shy and feel embarrassed or simply more stressed in such a situation which makes them hard to concentrate on the teacher's words.

It may be concluded that the students who perceive their teachers' attempt to keep eye contact with them as stressful, embarrassing or annoying are the shy and reserved ones who quite frequently have low self-esteem, feel insecure in their English classrooms and do not believe in their capabilities to meet the teachers' requirements. Being afraid not to make a mistake, instead of looking for the teacher's understanding and empathy, they built

boundaries around themselves to defend their fragile ego. Finally, 5% of the students claim that it does not matter whether a teacher looks at them when they speak or not. They state:

'I don't care whether he looks at me or not because I always say what I want or what I know anyway'

'The way I answer the teacher's question does not depend on whether she looks at me or not. I am only able to tell her what I know'.

These two sample comments indicate that those who expressed them are self-confident students who feel that their self-esteem is independent of their teacher's opinion.

When asked how frequently their English teachers keep eye contact with them, the majority of the students respond that their teachers do so often, which is quite a different answer from what half of the teachers claim. 53% of the teachers are convinced that they keep eye contact with their students almost always, adding that they focus on direct interaction with only one learner at a time. What is more, they express the opinion that in many cases the students are so stressed talking to them that they themselves try to avoid a direct eye contact and in this way the learners might have 'the impression' that it is the teacher who does not look at them. This shows that when talking to a teacher many students are so concentrated on what they want to say that they seem not to notice the non-verbal signals sent by the teacher.

2.2.7.4 Teacher mood

The data indicates that the teachers are aware of the fact that during a lesson they have to control their emotions. However, they also state that because they are not without feelings, they often bring them into their classrooms, which influences the lesson in various ways: 'I know that my mood influences the way my students feel in the classroom but I cannot simply leave my emotions behind the staff room door'.

All the teachers claim that they quite frequently bring their positive moods into the classroom, which usually makes the atmosphere of the lesson more cheerful as, according to what they notice, the students become less stressed and simultaneously more active: 'When I feel happy and relaxed I have the impression that my studens feel like that, too'. This shows how important the teacher's good mood is for effective interaction with his/her students.

On the other hand, those teachers who admit that they bring their negative moods into the classroom observe in such cases that the level of their students' anxiety increases and that the more stressed they are themselves, the more quiet the students usually are. However, as the teachers report, being quiet means in those situations being passive. 17% of the teachers

notice that if they happen to be in a bad mood during a lesson, their students become angry, irritated and arrogant. One teacher commented: 'Bad mood is like infection. If you have it, others 'catch' it as well'. It seems that a negative mood of the teacher has never a positive influence on the students and therefore should be always left outside the classroom door.
However, each of the teachers admit to being in a bad mood at least once in a semester. Two-thirds of them (63%) notice that they are generally in a good mood while teaching. Only two teachers state they are in a bad mood in the classroom quite often, revealing in the interviews that the main source of their bad mood are not personal problems but rather problems with some disobedient students whom they find hard to discipline:

> *When I am to enter the classroom knowing that some of the troublemakers are there my mood often changes from a good into a bad one during the break preceding the lesson.*

The students' questionnaire responses show that the teacher's good mood during the lesson always leads to better understanding of mutual intentions, more successful co-operation between the teacher and the students and generally more effective work as the teachers are more lenient towards the students' classroom performance. The students comment:

'When our teacher is cheerful, we feel motivated to work',

'When she is in a good mood, classroom learning is a pleasure,

'I am not afraid to answer my teacher's questions when he's in a good mood as I know that when I am wrong, he will always correct me with a smile on his face'.

In their opinions concerning the influence of the teachers' bad mood on them, the students express views reflecting those of their teachers'. The teacher's bad mood is for the students a source of fear, stress and frustration. 73% of them claim that they do not want to participate actively in the lesson when their teacher is in a bad mood, as they are afraid of the teacher's reaction in the case that they do not know the answer to a question, or when their response is incorrect. This shows that the teacher's bad mood during a lesson is perceived by the students to be almost a real danger that threatens their rapport with the teacher. This results in the students' withdrawal from active participation in the classes as well as their general unwillingness to take any action that could possibly anger the teacher:

'When she is in a bad mood I am scared to move in the case she asked me some question. I'm afraid that if I answer incorrectly, she will be furious',

'When our teacher is in a bad moo the lesson is a failure. We do not want to co-operate with her for fear we might get a bad mark',

'When she opens the door and I can see that she's in a bad mood I close my eyes and pray to God for the break to come soon. She is irritated and unpleasant and I am petrified'.
The teachers' mood in the classroom appears to have powerful influence on the students' well being in the classroom and therefore on the quality of classroom interaction and in consequence, the students' language progress.

2.2.7.5 Critical incidents - student misbehaviour

Almost two-thirds of the teachers admit that they have experienced a situation when a student (or some students') behaviour made them almost lose control of themselves. The teachers admit that in each case it was very bad behaviour of a student, or a group of students, which led to such a strong 'outburst' of the teachers' anger. The critical incidents enumerated were:
a. verbal incidents:

- disruptive talking (20%),
- swearing in the classroom (15%),
- quarrelling with the teacher and shouting at him or her (13%),
- insulting the teacher or other students (7%),
- rude comments directed at the teacher (7%),

b. non-verbal incidents:

- damaging school property, e.g. cutting school benches with a penknife, cutting curtains with scissors (17%),
- refusing to accept punishment (13%),
- littering the classroom (10%),
- bullying a student during a lesson, e.g. kicking him, spitting at him and throwing paper balls at the student (10%).

According to what the teachers claim, verbal reactions to the students' misbehaviour were always accompanied by non-verbal signals which constituted for the students an even better source of information about what their teacher felt as, according to Birdwhistell (1970), the visual channel of perception is much more sensitive to stimuli than the auditory. The non-verbal reactions that the teachers described to have experienced in connection with these incidents were (in the order of frequency of responses):

- loud scream often connected with such body movements as shaking the head and hands,
- leaning towards the misbehaving student, expressing disapproval with an index finger,
- criticising students' behaviour in a raised voice and harsh words,
- taking a misbehaving student to the school principal's room,
- leaving the classroom to calm down - and sometimes even cry (four women teachers admitted to doing this).

These reactions show that the majority of the teachers experiencing 'negative' critical incidents in their classrooms have problems with keeping control over their emotions. They get angry and sometimes even 'almost furious' and they often act according to what they feel. In the interview, 23% of the teachers confessed that that they had experienced such moments in their teaching career when they found it extremely hard to keep control over their emotions and almost smacked the student mostly for his/her arrogant behaviour and rude comments towards the teacher. Two-thirds of the teachers reported that they had eventually left the classroom to recover the emotional balance, while the other teachers decided to resolve such a situation by sending the disobedient student(s) to the principal to deter him/her (or them) from behaving so badly again.

According to the students' opinions, 27 teachers out of 30 happened to get extremely angry with the students who misbehaved and, for example responded to their teachers in a rude way, cheated at tests, swore loudly or even fought with other students. Only in the case of three teachers their students were never given a chance to see their English teacher furious. According to the students' observations, the teachers' reactions, both verbal and non-verbal to critical incidents which happened during lessons and resulted from the students' misbehaviour always indicated that the former were in such situations in a state of emotional arousal behaving in a way not typical of them. The students report that in the case of any of the incidents mentioned above their teachers usually reacted in the following way:

a. verbal reactions:

- shouted loudly and used threats, e.g. 'I will call your parents', 'You will have a penalty test for that', 'We will talk at the end of the school year', etc. when the students did not listen to the teacher, addressed him/her rudely or swore in the classroom,
- nervously commented upon the critical situation,

b. non-verbal reactions:

- used a lot of gestures trying to express what they felt with all their bodies,
- became pale or red in their faces, e.g. 'His face became as red as a beetroot and we knew that in a second he was going to burst with fury',
- looked at the student(s) angrily,
- sat down or stood up and did not move until students (and they themselves) calmed down in the case when the students did not pay attention to the teacher's admonitions,
- walked around the classroom, e.g. 'She moved around the classroom like a storm. We were terrified and unable to utter a word' (when the teacher found some students cheating at tests).

Asked to assess their teacher's verbal and non-verbal reactions to these critical moments, most students admit that they themselves would probably behave in the same way. However, there are also a few critical opinions from the students who claim that:

'the teacher's reaction was too strong',

'the teacher should not shout and threaten all the students',

'the teacher should talk to a badly behaving student after the lesson or just outside the classroom',

'the teacher's bad mood which was the result of a critical incident in the lesson influenced the lesson negatively and totally spoiled the friendly atmosphere in the classroom.'

The data shows that the number of incidents caused by badly behaving students during their English lessons is not very high, as 68% of the teachers report that a critical incident occurred during their lessons only a few times in their teaching careers. This indicates that most of the teachers rarely experience serious problems with keeping classroom discipline. During the interviews the teachers working at the profiled secondary school report having experienced the critical moments resulting from some students' misbehaviour much more often than the teachers from the comprehensive school. Although luckily none of the teachers lost control over him/herself at the critical moment, the body reactions that both they and their students listed suggest that the level of negative emotions that the teachers experienced was so high that they found it difficult to calm down quickly and think reasonably. It is significant that critical incidents, especially those negative ones, are seen as those moments when the students in most cases feel a lot of understanding towards the teacher who has to deal with the difficult situation and they sympathise with him/her:

I felt sorry for my teacher that she had to struggle with such a difficult situation. My classmates' behaviour was appalling. (...) I saw that the quarrel with Mike was for my teacher a very unpleasant experience. She was exhausted and sad. I hated Mike for what he did. He shouldn't have talked to her like that. Our teacher's task is to teach us English and not to waste time and energy persuading such students as Mike to start learning.

At the same time, however, such moments are a real test of the teacher's maturity and responsibility for his/her actions showing the degree of the teacher's emotional control.

Although most students' expectations concerning their teachers' behaviour in such situations are met, there is always a group of those who will be disappointed with the teacher's reaction and in the eyes of whom s/he may even lose respect due to those 'too exaggerated reactions'.

2.2.7.6 Teacher physical appearance

As non-verbal communication between the teacher and the students plays a significant role in the classroom, the teachers' attention needs to be drawn not only to their behaviour during lessons but also to their appearance, clothing and jewellery. According to Hartley (2001), the way a teacher looks constitutes a valuable source of information for students about the teacher's self-esteem, socio-economic class, character and mood. These 'messages' constitute the basis upon which students build their trust in the teacher.

The research data shows that almost none of the students can find in their English teacher's appearance anything that would hinder their concentration in a lesson and/or annoy them. Their comments concerning the way their English teacher looks are in most cases positive, e.g.:

'*My teacher always takes good care of her looks'*,

'*She is always dressed in a casual way'*,

'*She is dressed with casual elegance'*,

'I've never seen her without make-up',

'*She is always neat and clean'*,

'*He/She looks O.K. and is O.K.*'.

There are only six critical voices from the students that concerned three different teachers: two students claim that their English teacher wears clothes that would be more

suitable for a teenager and not an adult. Three other students think their teacher's style would suit a hippy party rather than school, because the teacher likes very colourful dresses. There is also one student who comments that her male teacher wears old-fashioned suits in *'funny'* colours. As may be concluded, the students have rather conservative views on the teacher's appearance in the classroom, which might have their source in the deeply rooted conviction that the teacher should have a 'formal look'. There are also a few male voices describing their teacher as wearing *'sexy'* clothes. However, it may be concluded that even if it is sometimes hard for the students to concentrate on the lesson and not their teacher's appearance, the boys like their teacher's style.

The three teachers being criticised for their style of clothing were surprised to hear that there were students who did not like it. However, none of them wanted to comment upon their students' views claiming that everybody had his/her own preferences concerning clothes and the style of wearing them. They therefore did not intend to change their style just to please their students. Generally, all thirty teachers express the view that the way a teacher looks plays a very important role in building the rapport with students. They claim that a teacher's appearance is for the students a source of information about who the teacher is and what values s/he represents which influence students' attitudes to this teacher.

2.2.7.7 Non-verbal aspects of classroom communication - the main findings

Comparing the teachers' and the students' responses to the questions concerning English teachers' body language in the classroom, it is clear that the students are attentive observers not only of what their teachers perform in the language classroom but also of 'how' they do it. The students were able to enumerate more facial expressions, gestures and other aspects of non-verbal behaviour typical of their teacher than the teachers themselves. The teachers, when conducting lessons, frequently do not pay attention to the way they look at students or use their bodies. The number of examples of different forms of non-verbal teachers' behaviour enumerated by the students shows that this channel of information transfer is very important for them and that the teachers are often not aware of the messages they send.

As for the repertoire of gestures and facial expressions used by the teachers, the data indicates that in the case of many teachers the patterns of behaviour in English classrooms that they represent are similar, although there are always some aspects typical of each individual language teacher. This means that many teachers tend to behave quite similarly at different stages of the lesson and in most typical classroom situations mainly because of the

fact that non-verbal behaviour is culturally grounded. As all of the teachers participating in the project were Polish, they had a tendency to react in a similar way when they wanted, for example, to express their approval or disapproval of the students' classroom performance. The students express the opinion that the way their English teacher behaves in the classroom, how s/he corrects them and expresses approval and encouragement influence their mood and the level of interest in the lesson sometimes even significantly.

Interestingly, even in the case when the teachers are very much liked and respected by the learners, some factors involved in the classroom interaction, such as the students' self-esteem and inhibitions, make it difficult for some students to overcome the debilitative anxiety they experience whenever their English teacher walks around the classroom and therefore is, in some students' opinion, too 'close'. Some teachers, on the other hand, find this way of monitoring students' work to be very effective because they believe that it leads to establishing a direct contact, resulting from the physical proximity of the interlocutors: the learner and the teacher. This discrepancy of opinions concerning this very significant dimension of classroom interaction that the teachers and the learners have indicates once again that the communication between the two parties involved in the teaching-learning process is imperfect and that it requires a lot of the teachers' reflection upon how their body language and other non-verbal aspects of classroom interaction help to build rapport with the students in order to be able to introduce all necessary improvements.

2.3 Aspects of teacher work influencing classroom discourse – the questionnaire, interview and observation data

2.3.1 Motivating students

The questionnaire responses indicate that the teachers are aware of the influence that motivating and expressing approval have on their students. Out of all the strategies that the teachers use to show their appreciation for the students' work the most popular, as could be expected, is praise which the teachers claim to use in most classroom situations. Another strategy that is also very frequently used is rewarding the students with a good mark for their language performance.

To raise their students' motivation in the lesson the teachers try to make it attractive and relevant to the students' interests and needs, to give their students a chance to increase their knowledge about topics they find exciting and to convince them that classroom learning is worth the effort. They try to convince their students that they will have a chance to use what

they learn in their future lives, which is according to Williams and Burden (1997) a key to successful motivating students to learn. Also, the teachers try to make teaching 'personalised' which means that they let the students express themselves as individuals, by talking and writing about their hobbies and interests, preparing project work on the topics which they find interesting, etc.

One-third of the teachers admit that in order to motivate their students to learn they introduce activities including an element of competition, e.g. games and quizzes and 43% of the teachers mention using brain activating methods such as, for example brainstorming, which is usually used as a warm-up activity. One of those teachers commented: 'When I manage to "shake" their brain with some game at the beginning, they work faster and more effectively'. 17% of the teachers also mention using the element of 'speed' drilling used in the Callan method to practise newly taught vocabulary and grammatical constructions as, according to one teacher's opinion: 'The quick pace of activities of this type always makes students alert and stimulates them to concentrate on what I am saying'.

When it comes to encouraging the students to learn English, 23% of the teachers state that what they do quite frequently is making the students aware of the 'benefits' of good knowledge of a FL for their future lives, for example, better job prospects, an interesting career, travel, etc. They also encourage their students to reach less distant aims such as passing the Matura exam or getting a good mark in the end-of-the-year certificates. Another form of encouraging students to learn which 33% of the teachers mention in their questionnaires and later in the interviews is the use of songs both to enliven the lesson and to motivate their students to learn English. They claim that the choice of a song depends to a great extent on their students' age and interest rather than the personal preferences of the teacher. In the interviews I got an overall impression that most of the teachers were determined to try out many different strategies to motivate their students to learn and make them attempt to communicate in the foreign language.

The responses that the students give in their questionnaires to a certain degree reflect those of their teachers. The students confirm that oral praise is the most frequently used method of expressing approval and it is also motivating for them. They notice that more elaborate, a 'full-statement' – as one student called it, form of praising, for example: 'Kasia scored the maximum number of points in the test. Congratulations!' is used relatively rarely and in most cases it is replaced by much shorter statements as: 'O.K.,Fine, Well done, Good job, Superb, Excellent'.

Another popular method of encouraging students to learn is, according to the teenagers, smiling which they claim to be more effective than, for example, bringing additional materials into the classroom in order to enliven the lesson. This indicates that the students appreciate personal and direct non-verbal contact with the teacher more than the possibility to work with even very attractive extra materials. Contrary to the teachers' responses, the next method, which the students think is used quite frequently, is rewarding their engagement in work by giving them good marks. However, the students express the view that the teachers reward their active participation in the lesson less frequently than the teachers claim to do. Organising quizzes and contests to encourage students to work as well as 'patting them on the shoulder' to express approval for what they achieved are, in the students' opinion, the least frequently used methods.

In their questionnaires the students were also asked to assess the motivational effectiveness of the above methods used by their teachers. Those that they perceive to be the most effective are good marks that they get, oral praising by the teacher, the chance to work with extra materials during the lesson and also the teacher's smile at them. The strategy which, according to the students, is less effective in motivating them to learn than the methods enumerated above is organising quizzes and competitions by the language teachers, but only in the case when the winners are not rewarded with a good mark (as otherwise the students perceive games and quizzes to be very motivating), and the least effective way is expressing teacher's approval by means of physical contact, e.g. 'patting the student on the shoulder'.

The data shows that the students are most motivated to learn if they only have a chance to get some benefit from their work in a form of a good mark, or teacher's praise. Bringing extra materials and smiling at students makes them feel good, but does not bring them any other 'benefits', therefore their popularity in the students' responses is not high in comparison with the two strategies commented upon earlier.

2.3.2 Assessing students

All of the teachers express the opinion that 'what a student knows' determines the choice of the mark s/he is given the most. The next important criterion of evaluation is the student's 'ability' to, as one teacher defined it ' sell what a student knows in such an intelligent way to make the teacher think that a student knows more than he or she really does'. The teacher's attitude to an individual student, student's physical appearance, or the previous marks s/he got

in the subject earlier in the term are claimed not to influence the evaluation of the student's progress.

The students' questionnaire responses demonstrate that for the majority of them (86%), it is the knowledge they possess that is the most important evaluation criterion for their teachers. The next factor that they claim to have a great influence on the mark they get is the grades they received earlier in the given term. The students express the opinion that the ability to skilfully present what they know contributes to the grade they get, too. In the students' perception, the teacher's attitude to a particular student, as well as the student's appearance, seem to influence the grade that the teachers give the least. Only in the case of 13% of the teachers many of their students held the opinion that whether these teachers liked the student or not influenced the 'quality' of questions (easy/difficult) that s/he got when being tested orally and therefore the mark the person finally received. The students' questionnaire responses indicate that in the case of two teachers the way their students looked had a strong influence on the marks they obtained. One of the students commented: 'If she does not like your style, you will never have 5 ['A' mark] for any oral activity'.

Although in the majority of cases the students agree with their teachers that what they know is the factor which counts most in the evaluation of their work, it may be surprising that both the teachers and the students alike agree that clever 'manipulation of the talk' with a teacher, which the teachers sometimes seem to approve of, is a skill which is perceived to be useful when it comes to oral testing of the students' knowledge. Asked in the interview about the reasons why the students' ability to direct the teacher's attention to the areas of language competence a student is good at is so highly praised, the teachers answered that they were aware of the fact that many students did not learn much or had problems with learning the language and that what they were able to present to their teacher was in many cases, only the language material they remembered from the lesson. The teachers agree that they sometimes let the students 'manipulate the conversation' just to avoid giving a student another bad mark, especially in the case of poor achievers. They explain that their intention is not to discourage those students from learning.

The teachers working in the profiled secondary school are most willing to give their students a chance to present what they know rather than what they are supposed to know, taking into consideration that the majority of the students attending this type of school are poor achievers. The comprehensive school teachers, who generally work with much better students, admit that they hardly ever accept any form of 'manipulation' on the part of their students and the students confirm this view. This shows that the choice of a grade that the

students obtain from their teachers also depends on who the students are and what type of school they attend. What teachers working in one type of school accept is not necessarily approved of by teachers working in another type of school. Thus, it appears that comparing the school grades of students attending different types of school will never give objective results taking into consideration the fact that different types of schools have got different educational objectives and that the individual profiles of the learners are usually quite different, too. What is more, individual teachers have different beliefs about both the role of evaluation in the FL learning process and its influence on students' language progress as well.

All the teachers claim that in their opinion the evaluation of their students' classroom performance is objective and fair. They seem to be aware of the fact that social pressure put on teachers' evaluation to be fair is very high and that even if they are not very skilful at, for example, speaking about English speaking countries in an interesting way, their evaluation in the eyes of both the students and indirectly also the local community is higher than that of a more skilful teacher who is perceived to be an unfair assessor.

Questionnaire responses indicate that the great majority of the students (87%) are convinced that their English teachers' evaluation is objective. Asked to support their view with appropriate arguments they wrote that their teachers had clear rules concerning the evaluation of the students' work, which eliminated favouritism. The second most commonly mentioned argument was that in spite of the fact that the students knew from classroom observation that some of their classmates were treated partially by the teacher, never did those students get better marks than they deserved. Other arguments, which appeared in the students' questionnaires, were:

'The teacher always gives each student a chance to obtain a good mark no matter whether he likes the student or not'

'The teacher always considers all the assessment decisions carefully'

'The teacher is always willing and able (!) to justify the choice of the mark he/she gives to students'

'The scoring prepared for tests always complies with the internal system of evaluation we have at school'.

The interviews with the teachers reveal that they are aware of the fact that whether the students perceive them to be fair or not shapes the level of the young people' trust and respect for a particular teacher and also for school as an institution. That is why the teachers claim they pay a lot of attention to being fair assessors of their students' language performance.

2.3.3 Expressing discontent

The teaching-learning process involves not only expressing approval of students' achievements, but also dissatisfaction with what students do or do not do in the classroom. In their questionnaires the teachers enumerate a number of strategies that they use to show their students they are not pleased with their language performance, or level of engagement in the lesson. However, the list of strategies that they apply in order to express their discontent is much shorter and much less varied than the one created when enumerating strategies used to express approval for the students' work. The teachers seem to use the same strategies all the time, not even trying to find their own, more creative and maybe more effective ways of informing students about how their work is perceived by the teacher.

When a student has no homework, 13 teachers give him/her a bad mark straightaway. To justify the use of such form of punishment one teacher wrote: 'Giving students a bad mark is the only way to make them do homework as some of them do not bring it systematically'. 57% of the teachers claim that one or two times in a term a student may not bring his/her homework. However, forgetting the homework for the third time means getting a bad mark. More than two-thirds of the teachers (77%) express the opinion that when a student approaches them before the lesson and explains why s/he has no homework they often show understanding and ask the student to do the homework and to show it done the next lesson. One teacher commented: 'I always ask my students if they have their homework or not. Then I check it. If it turns out that they wanted to cheat me, they get a bad mark for abusing my trust'.

If the students are not prepared for a lesson and it is easy to notice this in the course of the lesson, 90% of the teachers report that they express their dissatisfaction resulting from this fact in front of the class and often warn those students that they will get a bad mark, will be punished with extra homework, or even a 'penalty' test for not working systematically. 37% of the teachers mention in their questionnaires and interviews that when their students are not prepared for the lesson, which makes it is hard to introduce new language material, they always criticise the students' 'irresponsible behaviour'- as one teacher called her students' lack of preparation for the classes. They also remind the students of all the short-term and long-term benefits they may have when learning English regularly.

When a teacher wants to test individual student's knowledge of English orally and the student is not prepared, 53% of the teachers record this in the register, whereas 28% of them declare that they give such a student a bad mark straightaway. This indicates that the teachers

pay a lot of attention to systematic preparation for lessons, as they immediately take some action aimed at making students aware that the fact they are unprepared will not be forgotten.

In the case when a student fails a test, 83% of the teachers express their discontent about lack of students' progress orally when giving back the tests, while 17% of the teachers state that they talk face-to-face with those students who failed after the test results are announced to get to know what reasons were responsible for the student's failure. It seems that the second group of teachers mentioned here is more aware of how fragile the student's emotional life is and being tactful and understanding makes them more likely to succeed in building good rapport with the students.

The students' reflections upon the way their teachers react when they are dissatisfied with different aspects of the students' performance comply with the opinions expressed by the teachers. When it comes to doing homework or preparing for classes, the students report to be given a chance to be unprepared once or twice in a term and if they are not prepared the third time, they are usually given a bad mark. When asked to assess the effectiveness of the teachers' reaction in this situation, the majority of the students (89%) express the view that they would behave in the same way if they were in the teacher's place. However, there are also critical voices from some students who claim that they should have the right to be unprepared, or not have homework more than once or twice in a term. They support their views with the following arguments: "life is hard", "one cannot predict certain things", "there are other subjects to learn, too", "there is always too much homework in English'. In the case when a learner fails a test, most students from both types of schools agree with their teachers' view that such a learner deserves a bad mark. In the opinion of most subjects this is fair. A much smaller group of the students (3%) disapprove of the teachers' negative comments expressed when some of the teachers give back the checked and marked tests. The students stress that what they expect from the teachers is positive feedback in the form of emotional support and empathy, rather than 'breaking them down'. They are convinced that a bad mark is sufficient punishment for every student. There is also a group of students (2%) who like the way their teacher reacts to the fact they failed a test. They report that their teachers always asks them to explain the reasons for such poor performance so that the students might feel 'excused' and try to cheer them up by assuring them that they will do better the next time.

The interview data indicates that the overwhelming majority of the teachers (90%) informs their students of the expectations they have towards them at the beginning of each school term. The teachers and the students try to reach an agreement concerning the way that the teachers should react to the students' bad behaviour, lack of homework, or lack of

preparation for the lesson, so that the students know what the consequences for 'breaking the rules' will be.

The questionnaire responses show that most of the students have the need to 'excuse' themselves, i.e. to explain their teacher why they were not prepared for the lesson or a test, as they want to be sincere in their contacts with the teacher. This suggests that they really care about the quality of the rapport with their teacher and find his/her negative comments painful, although they are aware that they often deserve to hear such 'words of truth'- as one teacher called the comments. What is more, the students seem to be aware that without rules and regulations governing classroom life and the teaching-learning process they will have little chance to progress in learning the foreign language, as most teenagers usually have problems with systematic work.

2.3.4 Dealing with disruptive behaviour

The question of keeping discipline in the classroom is usually one of the topics most frequently discussed by teachers, as many of them experience some forms of student disobedience in their work for the simple reason that in a (language) classroom there is only one teacher whose task is to manage the teaching-learning process in which a whole (often quite large) group of students is involved. However, it must be stressed that as Brown and McIntyre (1993:44) indicate, what a teacher classifies as disruptive behaviour depends on his/her perception of what indiscipline is. Thus, students' 'misbehaviours' are perceived by the teachers as having different levels of 'gravity' and therefore each teacher has his/her own set of strategies that are used to prevent and deal with students' misbehaviour during a lesson. Not all of them are worth imitating, but the teachers claim that whether they use 'the unconventional strategies' – as one of the teachers said, or not, depends mostly on the 'gravity' of the students' bad behaviour.

The data reveals that the most popular strategy for dealing with disruptive behaviour is asking for the students' attention, which is very frequently used by 93% of the teachers when students interrupt them, or one another, do not focus on the lesson or when they simply talk in an off-task manner. Another strategy that is quite popular among the teachers is raising their voice. The teachers admit to using this strategy when the one mentioned earlier fails which, as they claim, happens quite frequently. The teachers express the view that they do not like using this particular strategy although there are cases when they see no other choice. There are also two teachers who claim that shouting is the method that works best when not used on a

regular basis. One of them commented: ‘When I shout once or twice they know it means problems and they are quiet again’.

Quite often the teachers choose to talk with a disobedient student when the lesson ends. The teachers claim that such a face-to-face talk usually works really well with misbehaving students who, being deprived of their classmates’ support, feel embarrassed and ashamed. Other popular strategies used by the teachers are testing the students’ preparation for the lesson in the case when they talked or laughed at their colleagues, interrupting the lesson and waiting until the students calm down when the teachers notice a general lack of concentration among students or writing a note in the class register informing the head teacher of the students’ bad behaviour.

In the repertoire of the strategies used by the teachers there are also a few which some of the teachers call ‘barbarian’. One of them is making the misbehaving student embarrassed by expressing malicious comments concerning his/her bad behaviour, or lack of knowledge in front of other students. 17% of the teachers who admit to using this strategy stress that they only use it in the case ofthese students who are extremely rude or arrogant towards them and do not seem to react to any other management strategy, as expressed by one teacher’s comment:

> *If a student does not listen to me and continues to misbehave I tell him to start working in the circus as good clowns are always welcome there.*

In some extreme situations when the students start, for example, fighting or swearing loudly in the classroom - and such incidents were reported mainly by the teachers working in the profiled secondary schools, the teachers send the student(s) to the school principal; 40% of the teachers admitted to having done this to least once in their teaching careers. However, in the majority of cases the teachers try to deal with most cases of students’ misbehaviour on their own. One teacher said: ‘Such a visit to the principal’s office means the teacher’s failure when it comes to the teacher-student rapport.’ Instead of involving the principal in restoring order in the classroom, three teachers confess they ask their students to stand still in the corner of the room and face the wall until the break time. Two other teachers tell the misbehaving students to leave the classroom and wait outside the door. The fact that some teachers make use of the management strategies perceived by other teachers to be ‘brutal’ may show that the former are unable to cope with their students’ misbehaviour effectively and therefore choose to deal with discipline problems using methods which often aim at humiliating students and lowering their self-esteem. This definitely does not lead to raising

teachers' authority in the students' eyes and the fact that they need to use such strategies may indicate that they are not perceived as an authority by their students.

When it comes to the strategies used for dealing with disruptive behaviour, the students hold the opinion that the most popular of them is raising voice by the teachers. Surprisingly, telling students to be quiet is thought by them to occupy the second position on the scale of frequency. When asked to explain why in the students' questionnaire responses, the strategy of raising voice preceded that of telling students to quiet down, the teachers expressed the opinion that they asked for the students' attention so frequently during each lesson that the learners did not seem to react to that any more and that they stopped talking only when the teacher raised his/her voice. The teacher's raised voice means that not being obedient may be the cause of the teacher's anger and therefore may have some 'unpleasant' consequences, such as a penalty test or extra homework.

As for the teachers' use of other methods of keeping discipline in the classroom, the students claim that the strategies used quite frequently by some of their teachers are a record in the school register describing the students' bad behaviour and a 'quick' penalty test covering the material taught by the teacher during the last three lessons.

However, when it comes to the use of such strategies as sending a student to the principal or asking a student to leave the classroom, the students' responses are similar to those of their teachers. Only a few learners admit that their teachers use such strategies stressing each time that they are used only in 'extreme' situations when the all traditional methods fail. Surprisingly, when asked how they would react if they were teachers themselves, many students claim they would behave in the same way, although there are also students who comment that their teacher's choice of a strategy was not appropriate, because the punishment that s/he decided to use was in those students' opinion humiliating to them.

The data presented and analysed here and collected by means of teacher questionnaire, learner questionnaire and lesson observations indicate that although there are many similarities in the teachers' and learners' perceptions of different aspects of the teachers' classroom performance, there are also some discrepancies that the teachers were not aware of. An effort put in identification of the similarities and most of all, 0the discrepancies as well as their sources is believed to raise the teachers' awareness of themselves as professionals and also of who their learners are, what views on the teacher's performance they have and what they expect their teachers to do to be able to ensure more effective classroom discourse.

3. The teacher diary: presentation and analysis

Introduction

Writing a diary proved to be a very challenging task mainly because it required very systematic work. Although at the beginning some problems with the selection of topic for each new entry appeared, writing the diary became over time one of the most pleasant moments of the school day, during which it was possible to concentrate only on observations and reflections concerning the lessons conducted in different language groups that I taught. The 'must' to write changed with time into the 'need' to write.

Although generally each new entry was devoted to just one selected topic, whose choice usually depended on some event that had happened during the lesson, for the sake of the diary presentation these entries were grouped into two main parts. The first of these included entries devoted to the description of myself as a professional with the beliefs, attitudes and expectations I had towards myself, the students and towards teaching as a profession. The second part concerned the description and analysis of my behaviour in the classroom with respect to management of the teaching-learning process and shaping a rapport with the students. Reading the whole diary it is possible to trace how my professional awareness raised making me a more mature teacher. The entries presented here, however, are only samples selected to illustrate the reflections of the author. At the same time the analysis of the questions the entries focus on is based on other thematically similar entries from the whole corpus (some of which are included in Appendix 5).

The analyses of the diary are presented in a sequence covering the following areas of focus:

1. The teacher
    - The influence of the teacher's personality features, beliefs about teaching and the individual ways of building authority in the students' eyes on classroom discourse (interaction)
    - The teacher's body language as a tool to lower the social and affective distance between herself and the learners
2. The teacher's classroom conduct
    a) Individual approach to students
        - Ways of approaching an individual learner

- Raising learners' motivation to learn

b) The teacher's feedback on student language production and behaviour
   - Feedback to errors
   - Expressing approval/disapproval

c) Management of the teaching-learning process
   - The teacher's selection of the roles played in the classroom (with special attention paid to the roles of a motivator, attentive listener and observer of students' work)
   - Managing classroom interaction
   - Maintaining classroom discipline.

When planning to write a diary aimed at verbalising my thoughts, experiences and observations connected with teaching, it was my intention to incorporate it into the portfolio that I was working on for my professional promotion. Apart from the diary, constituting the integral part of the portfolio, it also included my notes taken during workshops and conferences I participated in, observation protocols prepared when observing lessons conducted by my colleagues as well as assessment forms in which my students assessed different aspects of my classroom conduct. The idea behind preparing the portfolio was my belief that it would constitute an effective tool for identifying my strengths and weaknesses in order to become a better teacher.

The analysis of the diary demonstrates that building a positive rapport with students, based on mutual understanding and respect seems to be one of the prime responsibilities of a teacher. My diary entries made it possible to identify different psycho- and sociolinguistic factors that shape classroom interaction and their influence on the teacher-learner classroom discourse.

3.1 The teacher

3.1.1 The teacher's personality

5th of September ***Being 'real'***

' As I came into the classroom many of the second grade students were giggling. I did not know why they behaved this way and decided to wait until they calmed down. However, they just could not stop. The time was flying. Ten minutes of the lesson was already wasted, so I

asked the class to tell me the reason for their being in 'such an excellent mood'. None of them answered my question. That was enough. I told them that their behaviour got on my nerves and asked them to do activities from the activity book until they quietened down. Then I sat at the desk pretending that I was busy segregating my papers without looking at them. I could hear them whisper something to one another. I must have looked disappointed because two minutes later Maciek, the bravest student in the group stood up and apologised for their bad behaviour towards me. I accepted their apology and started conducting the lesson according to my plan. The students were quiet but surprisingly co-operative, as if they did not want to make me angry or upset again.'

This entry shows that trying to establish a good rapport with students a teacher needs to be genuine in expressing his/her feelings, even those negative ones. Although most of the representatives of humanistic approaches, e.g. Moskowitz (1978) call for 'accentuating the positive' in ensuring successful teacher-learner relationship, being honest with students, i.e. being the real-self, which involves spontaneous expression of not only happiness but also of anger, sadness and disappointment 'experienced' in the classroom, contributes to gaining students' true respect. Rogers (1994) claims that the teachers' 'realness' – free expression of their personality, is the most basic condition for learning to take place as being, e.g. enthusiastic, sensitive or sympathetic 'gives the touches of realness on a core aspect of teacher's work' (Rogers, 1994). On the other hand, teaching without disclosing information about the self makes the process of teaching faceless, sterile and therefore the teacher may be seen as hostile. It seems that the teacher's personality constitutes an aura in the classroom environment, which makes students feel secure. The observations of my students' reactions to my classroom behaviour indicate that it is perceived to be natural as my students seem to appreciate the way I conduct lessons.

22nd of September A teacher as an explorer

'The first meeting with a new language group. For some teachers this is probably a nightmare but not for me! I love meeting new people and appreciate being given this chance when every school year starts. Today I entered the classroom, looked at my students, smiled at them and knew that I was in my element. A new language group - a new field for exploration. First, with a voice sounding peacefully and naturally I asked them to introduce themselves in English - to tell me their names and say a few sentences about their families, interests and hobbies. While they were speaking I came closer to each student with an

encouraging smile on my face. I tried to keep eye contact with each of them with a look expressing interest and my positive attitude to them. I wanted to make them feel comfortable but at the same time I wanted to see how they perceived the fact I was so close to them. Looking at them it was possible to 'read' from their faces that they liked the direct way I approached them. Once again in this new school year it occurred to me that what I liked teaching for most was the possibility it gave me to meet new people and interact with them.'

The analysis of this entry seems to indicate that the influence of the teacher's personality on teaching and the rapport s/he has with students cannot be undervalued. It appears that the fact the teacher enjoys meeting new people and co-operating with them while being at the same time very dynamic and willing to explore new facts about them greatly facilitates teaching, as students like the atmosphere created in the classroom by the teacher who is open and interested in them. They therefore appreciate the fact that they can spend time with such a teacher at school. Degan (2004) claims that the way that the teacher addresses students and also his/her tone of voice and pace of speaking, gestures, facial expressions and the distance (proxemics) s/he keeps from students are all expressions of the teacher's personality informing students of who s/he is and what his/her expectations are.

13th of January ***Problems with pacing the lesson***

'The third week in this school year. My first grade students did not have the course books yet so l brought my own materials. I wanted the lesson to be both real fun and a chance for the students to get to know one another better so what I prepared was a set of language games to be played in groups. The topic of the lesson was: "Icebreakers: collecting information about new friends". While the students were busy working I had a chance to see how well they spoke English and how comfortable they felt using the FL in the classroom. I could also observe their behaviour and formulate conclusions concerning the group structure. The students seemed to like the games and we smoothly moved from one of them to the other. The games were short so as not to make the students feel bored and tired. I was so involved in presenting new games to the students and they seemed to work so fast that I forgot to control the pace of the lesson. A quick look at the students' faces made me realise that some of them were completely lost and did not know what to do. The school bell started ringing and I knew I failed to successfully implement my lesson plan.'

Analysing this entry one may come to the conclusion that the way of conducting a lesson by the particular teacher, e.g. a pace of the lesson, is to a certain degree connected with the type of teacher's personality. For example, being an impulsive type together with an extrovert nature makes a teacher an energetic person who likes doing things fast. Also, one may draw the conclusion that being quick and active makes a teacher very flexible, i.e. able to change or improve any element of the lesson the moment that s/he notices the students do not like, do not understand or do not follow it. However, the teacher's self-reflection as well as peer-teacher's or external expert's observation comments upon the teacher's classroom behaviour may also help him/her to notice that some aspects of his/her personality may have both positive and negative influence on the quality of classroom interaction (Appendix 5, No 2). Impulsive teachers, for example may not be aware that the pace of their speaking or conducting lessons, although perceived by them to be natural, may make some students, especially those with low levels of language competence feel overwhelmed. Thus, teachers need to reflect upon the way their personality affects teaching to be able to take steps aimed at controlling the pace of conducting lessons and speaking in the classroom for the benefit of their students and the teaching-learning process.

What is also recommended is to carefully observe the students' behaviour to be able to notice what aspects of the teacher's classroom behaviour make his/her students intimidated, overwhelmed or annoyed. The teacher's focus on task achievement, rather than meeting the students' needs, may lead to the situation where learners will feel lost and frustrated, which may have a negative effect on the classroom communication. It needs to be stressed once again that flexibility facilitates creating the learning environment that contributes to successful classroom discourse. Being able to restructure the lesson, to 'give a situation a new turn that is unexpected for the class', as Appel (1995:35) puts it, in order to solve some discipline problems immediately, or to raise students' motivation in a lesson when the signs of boredom and fatigue are seen on the students' faces is therefore a very useful skill in teaching. Thus, as was already stated earlier, teachers need to observe what the current mood and the physical state of the class are to be able to adjust to them the lesson plan whenever there is such a need.

3.1.2 The teacher's beliefs

16th of January ***My beliefs***

'The lesson was devoted to the presentation of project work that my students were assigned to prepare in groups of four, using authentic materials such as English magazines, newspapers and leaflets available in our school language library. I gave them a free hand in choosing the topic for the presentation to learn what their choices would be. There were presentations devoted to outer space and aliens, fashion, modern technology and dinosaurs. The silence that prevailed in the classroom when different groups were presenting their projects showed that the students were really engaged in the lesson and that the projects captured their attention. I was also satisfied with the presentations they performed as they were not only interesting and informative but the language used in them was quite correct as well. I praised every performing group myself and also encouraged the students to show their appreciation for their classmates' presentations with applause. As could be observed, the students liked this form of expressing approval.

Reflecting upon the lesson I understood that my satisfaction was due to the conviction that the way I planned the lesson complied with the beliefs I had about teaching. One of my beliefs is that students are more successful learners when language learning is integrated with learning other subjects such as mathematics and history. A cross-curricular attitude to teaching makes it possible to meet the individual needs of my students and the fact that the presentations were so successful with my students is the best proof of that. I also believe that learners should be given a lot of independence and also support from the teacher to be able to accomplish given language tasks successfully, but in a way that they themselves would choose to approach it as this is what makes them take responsibility for their own learning.'

The diary data indicates that classroom interaction seems to be the most effective if the teacher believes that the foreign language classroom needs to be a place where students can feel secure and freely explore the world in the target language on their own and not being guided, but only supported by the teacher. Rogers (1994) stresses that only such an environment can foster students' cognitive, social and emotional growth. To be able to create such an environment a teacher needs to be eager to get to know his/her students' aspirations and expectations but also their abilities, plans and attitudes to the subject, school and life in general. What is more, teachers need to self-reflect upon the beliefs that they have about teaching. Only when they are verbalized can teachers really understand what is important for them as FL teachers.

7th of April ***A reward for the teacher***

'I am very satisfied with the lesson that I have just conducted. At least once a week I try to prepare some 'special' lesson to avoid the monotony threatening my teaching. To make my students work more with authentic materials, I prepared for them a task sheet entitled 'How to visit London on one's own', which consisted of 35 questions. The students, working in groups, were asked to give responses to the questions by finding the piece of information they needed in postcards, leaflets, brochures, tickets and timetables that I brought from England. For example, their task was to find out what the price of the ticket to Shakespeare's birthplace was. They promptly set off to work and seemed to like the task very much. I loved watching them working over the task. They were browsing through piles of colourful papers whispering things to one another not to be heard by the members of other groups. I walked around the classroom helping them whenever they had a problem with understanding the materials they worked with. I could see that they found the task to be very interesting. Although the time was flying quickly, most groups managed to find all the answers before the break. However, there were two groups who did not complete the quiz and who did not really want to leave the classroom until they would finish. I thought at that moment that the greatest reward for me as a teacher was when my students were so engaged in learning that they didn't even want to leave the classroom until they finished the assigned task!'

Analysing the diary entry here one may come to the conclusion that giving students the chance to find new information on their own is one of the keys to develop a good rapport between the teacher and the students. Perceiving students as explorers who collect information about the world seems to be more advantageous to classroom discourse than treating them as passive recipients of knowledge. This understanding of teaching was expressed by Rogers (1994) who advocated teacher's responsibility to make students autonomous individuals who know their self-value and are able to make their own choices.

The reflections included in the diary seem to confirm also another view presented by Rogers (1994) that 'meaningful learning', i.e. students' awareness of the purposefulness of the teaching-learning process is an important condition for effective classroom discourse and teaching-learning process in general. It means that teachers need to be able to do their job in such a way that their students will have the impression that they really need the knowledge the teacher wants to share with them. In other words, the subject matter must be or at least must be perceived by students to be relevant to their needs as this is what makes them believe that what they learn at school, following the teacher's instruction, has sense and is relevant for their lives.

23rd of May ***The need for approval***

'Today at the beginning of the lesson I gave back the corrected essays written two weeks before by the second grade students I taught. The topic of the essay was ' My secret world'. I liked my students' works very much as they were very creative and also well –written pieces of writing. However, I thought that Karolina's essay was the best of all. It was not only very imaginative but it also had an excellent choice of vocabulary, which made the work very interesting to read. I told the group that I really appreciated Karolina's essay and asked her if I could read it out loud. She nodded her head in silence. When I finished, all the students started clapping their hands and congratulating her on the great job she did. When the lesson finished she came up to the desk and said "Thank you. I'll never forget this lesson". I feel really good about that.'

The entry presented indicates how important both the teacher's and the peer's approval is for the student's feeling of self-worth. Positive feedback reinforces students' motivation to learn and contributes to realising their potential as learners and people. Encouraged to learn and to develop skills by being given positive feedback, learners may 'discover' the areas of their strengths and weaknesses and thus become more reflective and therefore also more autonomous learners who are not afraid to attempt at using the foreign language. Students need to be given positive feedback as often as possible and teachers need to 'be positive' in their relationships with students as for some of them school is the only place where they have a chance to hear some kind of appreciation for what they do. It cannot be forgotten, however, that a condition for the successful FL classroom discourse to be created in the classroom is the mutual feedback that both students and teachers get from each other. Teachers also need to get feedback from their students as this is what motivates them to work and to be effective teachers..

3.1.3 Building authority

22nd of September ***My authority***

'That was the last lesson for today. The second grade students were active and willing to work. We were talking about what made people well remembered. I asked my students if there were some people they remembered well for something they did. A few students volunteered to tell the class about their grandparents, friends and primary or gymnasium school teachers.

And then, Andrzej - one of the most talkative boys in the group, asked me if there was a person I admired. I told them about my secondary school English teacher who had greatly influenced my future. What I remembered most about her was that she treated me (and everyone else in the class) with so much respect. She showed so much love for her profession and so great an awareness of what her role in the classroom was that her attitude eventually rubbed off on me. She was everything I could have asked for in a high school teacher. It was she who encouraged me to become a teacher after I graduated from secondary school. I told the story to the students and my final words were: 'She is the person I admire and I am working hard to be like her'. They listened quietly and asked no more questions. However, they did not need to ask. From the way they looked at me I deduced they understood and respected my choice of a profession. The first step was made. Now they know at least that I als, just like them, used to be a teenager looking for an authority – for a friendly adult who would guide me and give me support. The fact that I had similar dilemmas as they experience now made me, I suppose, more 'human' in their eyes.'

The entry shows how important to a student's future life may be his/her 'meeting' with the teacher perceived as an individual with his/her own private life with all its ups and downs. The teacher's experience presented in the entry may serve as an inspiration for teachers to reflect upon the ways they use to build authority in their students' eyes. The diary data indicates that what students may appreciate most in their teacher is his/her openness to their successes and failures and also the positive attitude to teaching as a profession. On the basis of the data presented, it is possible to draw the conclusion that being 'the true self' and not being a conformist acting 'as the students play' the teacher may deserve students' respect best. Similarly, students may view the teacher as an authority if s/he treats teaching English seriously. In this way s/he informs the students that they should treat the language in the same way, or otherwise they show their disrespect for the teacher.

The analysis of different teaching experiences described in the diary (Appendix 5, No 6) indicates that although it is very good for the teaching-learning process if the teacher and students have a good rapport i.e. they like, accept and respect each other, certain 'professional distance' has to be preserved. The teacher needs to be careful not to let his/her students shorten the distance between them and him/her too much as this may lead to the situation when the learners will try to 'abuse' the teacher's friendliness. On the other hand, being too firm with the students may be the reason for their withdrawal and therefore result in poor results obtained and a poor rapport with the teacher. To be perceived as an authority teachers

need to try to 'maintain a non-authoritarian presence', as Widdowson (1990:188) puts it, and try to win students' respect by being a facilitator in their discovering the world and not solely a knowledge-giver expecting respect for what s/he knows.

The diary analysis also shows how important it is to make a continuous effort to increase one's knowledge about the learners, as even basic personal interest in each individual learner's life contributes to increase in their trust and respect for the teacher. Appel (1995) states that learning students' names appears to be one of the basic steps to gain students' respect but also to be able to control students' behaviour effectively.

Other factors – prerequisites for being perceived as an authority, seem to be professional competence and responsibility for the teacher's classroom performance. If the teacher does not feel confident about his/her language competence, the students – even beginners, will quickly discover his/her 'fears', not so much on the basis of verbal, but rather non-verbal behaviour of the teacher in the classroom. To avoid such a situation those teachers who feel insecure in the classroom need to first reflect upon their classroom performance and then try to eliminate or reduce those aspects of their behaviour that might negatively influence students' assessment of their work. Robertson (2002) suggests that in order to build their authority, teachers may enter 'pupil territory' by moving around the classroom freely even if they do not feel secure as professionals. He claims that not only entering the pupils' territory, but also teachers' body language may be used to build authority in the students' eyes. He indicates that the signals sent by teachers and perceived by students to be indicators of the teachers' status of competent professionals are body posture, facial expressions and voice. Thus, he suggests that before 'earning' authority by good teaching, a teacher may try to behave in the classroom as if s/he already had it, as this would contribute to creating positive image of him/herself as professional.

The diary data indicates that not only having all the necessary qualifications to teach but also being able to give students the sense of achievement are the conditions that the teacher needs to meet to be perceived as an authority by his/her students.

3.1.4 The teacher's body language and other non-verbal aspects of classroom interaction

16th of October ***Important 'details'***

'An ordinary lesson in the first grade. Without spending too much of the lesson time I wanted to check how effectively my students had learned the new language material (comparative and superlative forms of adjectives) that we had covered in the previous lesson. So, I started

to walk energetically along rows of benches nominating different students to answer my questions. When their answer was correct I rubbed or clapped my hands to show them that I was pleased with their performance. I also asked Magda a question. I waited for a moment but there was no answer. I asked if she had understood me. She nodded, so I asked her the same question again. Still, there was no answer. Looking at her I noticed that she was gazing at the blackboard and did not move. When asked if she was prepared for the lesson, she nodded again. There was, however, a blank look in her eyes. She seemed to be panic-stricken. I understood that it was my behaviour which could have been stressful and at the same time intimidating to her. I called her name and when she looked at me I smiled at her putting a hand on her shoulder. Then I asked her to sit down, write the answer to the question in her writing book and give it back to me when she was ready. She handed her notebook to me a minute later. Her answer was correct. Since that moment I started controlling my body language more not to be too fast and too energetic which as I learnt could be perceived by some students as intimidating so as not to make them feel overwhelmed as Magda felt today.'

This entry shows that whatever teachers do or say in the classroom matters for their students. It means that teachers need to be aware of their own behaviour during lessons as what on the surface may look like an almost irrelevant detail, e.g. a gesture, or tone of voice, in reality affects students' behaviour either positively or negatively. Teachers also need to remember that that positive 'details', such as a smile, have a positive effect on students' behaviour and motivation to learn, sometimes triggering in them a change for the better.

7th of November ***A new image***

' When I entered the classroom my students all looked at me and kept looking for the next fifteen seconds with their eyes wide open before finally one of them exclaimed: 'Wow, you look great today'. Indeed, I had tied back my hair and put on a colourful skirt. It was spring and I felt like a teenager myself. Free and full of energy. I could 'read' from my students' looks that they liked my 'new' image and for the first time I felt comfortable with a different look, too. I also noticed that this change in my appearance positively influenced my students' behaviour during the lesson. They worked faster, did the assigned language tasks more willingly and generally seemed to be more open to me and motivated to answer questions that were asked. I understood that they felt more comfortable with me in the classroom because I myself felt better and more secure as their teacher.'

Reflecting upon different experiences and observations presented in the diary and concerning the non-verbal aspects of the classroom discourse, leads to the conclusion that physical appearance of the teacher in the classroom may undergo changes over time as his/her 'professional self-confidence' increases. It may mean that the beginning of the teaching career of a teacher may be marked with subconscious fear that in order to be respected by the students, s/he must look 'serious' to show his/her status.

When reflecting upon the non-verbal aspects of classroom interaction teachers need to remember that students come to school with certain expectations concerning not only their teachers' behaviour but also their appearance. If students' expectations are met during lessons, their attention is focused on what the teacher says more than on how s/he looks. Non-standard appearance such as, for example too 'strong' make-up, unusual hairstyle and clothes colouring and styles, may distract students' attention making it hard for them to concentrate on the subject matter. Instead, they may find it much more attractive to make assumptions about the reasons behind some teacher's unusual, and maybe surprising, looks.

However, as the presented entry indicates, introducing changes in the teacher's appearance may also positively influence the teacher-learner rapport giving students a new and 'fresh' look at the teacher. Giving students an opportunity to see 'an individual' in their teacher makes the teacher-learner relationship and the teaching-learning process in general more humanistic and accessible.

19th of December ***No throat problems any more***

'Today I was telling my first grade students about Christmas traditions in the UK. I brought some articles and pictures to illustrate what I was talking about. My students were quite interested in my lecture and asked me a lot of questions. Then we sang some Christmas carols together. When the break started and the students left the classroom I sat on my chair feeling exhausted but happy. I remembered a similar 'Christmas lesson' three years ago. After that lesson I lost my voice for the next two days. Suddenly it occurred to me that I did not have any problems with my throat any more. I could not remember when they had finished. They simply gradually disappeared. I speak in a lower voice now than I used to do and my students can still hear me perfectly well. Thinking about the possible reason for my throat problems I came to the conclusion that they had resulted from the attempts made to show the students my status. By speaking loudly I wanted to show my dominance over the students and to stress my 'presence' in the classroom. Now I know that I did it just to hide my fear resulting from my lack of experience in teaching.'

As the quoted entry shows, not only teacher's appearance, but also his/her use of pitch of voice as an indicator of status may undergo fluctuations over time. In the first years of teaching some teachers may tend to speak very loudly not being consciously aware of that. Looking for the explanation of this phenomenon one may come to the conclusion that speaking loudly as well as wearing formal clothes (as mentioned earlier) are strategies which may be used by inexperienced teachers to decrease the feeling of professional insecurity they suffer from and build protective walls to defend themselves. Speaking loudly may give some teachers the feeling of having total control over the group of students who are frequently afraid to interrupt the teacher being overwhelmed by his/her 'loud' presence.

24th of April ***My body and what it communicates***

'The topic of the lesson today was 'Personality adjectives' and the lesson proved to be a real success. I gave the students short texts describing both appearance and personality of different film and book characters. Their task was to guess what the title of the film or book the characters came from was. When the students could not guess the meaning of some adjective used in the text, I tried to 'show' them its meaning using no words, but only my body. It was real fun for me and a laugh for them, too, especially when I tried to 'show' them what easy-going meant. Making faces, grinning, gesturing, leaning and bending my body, walking, running and jumping around the classroom made my students surprised with my behaviour but pleased that the lesson was so entertaining and interactive at the same time. Then, the students were asked to draw some character that was not mentioned in the text read and to try to 'show' some distinctive feature of its personality using only their bodies, as I did. Although initially embarrassed, the students proved to be quite willing to present the character they chose using only a drawing and their own body language. My lack of inhibition must have been an inspiring example for them.'

Self-monitoring of teachers' classroom behaviour and improvement on it which the process of systematic writing may trigger, may make teachers more aware of the gestures and facial expressions used in the classroom. For example, here self-monitoring helped me to realise that I was a very 'gesture' person with not only my hands but also all the body and face usually engaged in the communication with students, especially at the moment of presenting new language material, correcting errors and expressing approval and

encouragement, which led to the situation that a whole range of facial expressions and gestures was sometimes used to replace words.

The observations of the students' reactions to outward gestures directed at them and connected with open arms and hands confirm that the use of this kind of gestures leads to building mutual trust. This means that 'open' body language is one of the factors contributing to the positive feelings that the students have towards their teacher. However, some 'authoritarian' gestures used by the teacher such as pointing at a student with an index finger, frowning, or even showing a 'poker face', i.e. a face deprived of any feelings are also important for building a teacher-learner rapport as they give students information that their behaviour is unacceptable. Using a gesture or a facial expression instead of words does not interfere with the conduct of the lesson and the teacher's performance.

Reflecting upon their classroom behaviour teachers may discover that their body position while conducting a lesson has its source in the beliefs they hold. For example, I realised that I never spent the entire lesson sitting at the desk, as I believed that it was the teacher's responsibility to supervise each student's work and behaviour. That is why I always walked around the classroom offering help to my students whenever they needed it.

The diary analysis demonstrates that the teacher's body language in the classroom may contribute to building a good rapport with students by giving them emotional support they need. The only condition that needs to be met, however, is that teachers must be willing and able to control their body reactions and to adjust them to the reactions of students so as not to make the latter feel unnecessarily stressed or intimidated. On the other hand, teachers need to be aware that in their effort to meet their students' needs they should not let the students feel at ease since the very first lesson of the language course as this may lead to discipline problems.

3.2 The teacher's classroom performance

3.2.1 Approaching an individual learner

21st of November ***Individual approach***

'I try to use every opportunity to spend some time with my students and to collect information about them. My favourite form of data collection is initiating a conversation with a student who leaves the classroom as the last one after the lesson. Today I learned from Daria, a student of the first grade, that she had not prepared for the test because her mother had been in hospital and she had had to take care of her younger brother. She also told me that the

reason for her unwillingness to read in the classroom was the reading problems she had as a dyslexic. The 'talks' with my students, like the one I had today, often cast some light on the source of my students' learning problems and make me both more understanding to them and also sensitive to the emotions that they experience in connection with different events taking place in their private lives. I wrote down the information that I had obtained from Daria in my notebook with the intention to include it into her file constituting a part of the teaching portfolio I had. This way even at the end of semester or a school year I could remember that her problems with concentration in a lesson and the poorer marks she obtained were the result of difficult experiences she had for some time in the school year.

As a teacher I tried out many different ways to collect information about my own learners. Personally, I believe that one of the best and the easiest ways to do this is to observe students' behaviour in and outside the classroom, to formulate conclusions concerning the observations and to verify them by means of the 'face-to-face talks' in order to establish or to maintain personal contact.

The entry quoted shows that as teaching experience grows, teachers become more successful in finding their own ways of collecting information about students which, in their opinion, are the most effective and to create their own routines for doing this. One of the most useful but simultaneously also most time-consuming methods of collecting information about students is the creation of a FL teaching portfolio containing the written tests and the Xerox copies of essays prepared by each student. The portfolio may also include each student's profile prepared on the basis of the teacher's observations of the individual student's classroom behaviour and his/her language progress. Also, it may include information on who the student is as a person and a FL learner and how s/he has changed over a given period of time.

16th of January ***Discovering group structure***

'During the last lesson I gave my first grade students a simple questionnaire which aimed at providing me with information about the internal structure of the group as seen by the learners themselves. I found a ready-made questionnaire in one of the methodology books I had read. I analysed the students' responses yesterday evening and today, equipped with the newly gained knowledge I decided to see whether what they had written in their questionnaires found its reflection in the reality of the classroom. It was easy to notice that my students' responses confirmed most of my observations. There was, however, one thing, which I had found quite surprising. According to my students' views, Marcin was not so much

a star but a leader of the group. I always thought that the leader was Damian, his best friend. To verify this discrepancy existing in my and my students' perception of the leading person in the group during the lesson I had with them today I divided the students into groups and in this way I created for myself an opportunity to observe Marcin. I noticed that he was chosen to be the 'writer' in his group and that the ideas he proposed to be included in the story that they were asked to write were accepted by other members of the group without a single comment. It was him who decided about the plot and the characters. Interestingly, the other students working with him in the group neither commented upon nor seemed to object to this fact. He must have a strong personality and he really appears to be the leader for his peers. The questionnaire distributed to the students helped me to notice the fact I had not observed before.'

The diary entry shows that the information collected by means of a questionnaire, together with the teacher's observations, may facilitate understanding of the internal rules governing the life of the particular language group, its group dynamics. Hadfield (1992) indicates that teachers' awareness of the group dynamics resulting from understanding of these rules may help teachers to answer questions that they pose to themselves when teaching in the particular language group. For example, the teacher may learn the reasons why members of the group do not trust one another or why some students are reluctant to take initiative. Knowing that some students do not cohere into a group may help teachers to pay more attention to those students who are rejected by the others and to plan pair-work and group-work in such a way that the students will have a chance to integrate with the group and to be accepted by its members

Also, teachers may find a questionnaire an easy way to find what students' attitudes to school and teachers are, what hobbies and free time activities they have, what their family background and future plans are. The information gathered in this way may help them to create an overall picture of who each individual learner in the particular language group is. This, in turn will make it easier for the teachers to understand their students' behaviour in, but also outside, the classroom and to create better opportunities for successful communication with them.

27th of March Misbehaving Mark

'I have always had some discipline problems with one of my second grade students - Mark. At first I thought that he did not like the subject, or me but it did not seem to be the case. Today I

came to school earlier to do some paperwork but before going to the staff room I went to the school psychologist's office first to tell her about my problems with Mark and ask for some advice on how to deal with his bad behaviour. The psychologist told me about the difficulties that Mark's family experienced as his father had walked out of the family. I learned that the boy had to work in the afternoon to help his mother bring up two younger children. This information completely changed the way I perceived this student. Understanding and empathy replaced annoyance and dissatisfaction.'

The question of getting to know the learners in order to meet their educational and emotional needs was raised in the diary several times. Apart from the methods of collecting data about the learners, which were mentioned above, the analysis of this entry indicates that contacting the school psychologist may also provide the teacher with very useful information about who individual students are. The knowledge of what final marks a particular student obtained in his/her final exams in gymnasium, for example, may make it easier for the teacher to determine the general intellectual level of the learner and to understand his/her classroom behaviour.

The quoted entry as well as several other entries from the diary (e.g. Appendix 5, No.1,4) show that in order to have a good rapport with learners the teacher needs to devote a lot of time and energy to make sure that the learners will get what they need in order to make progress in English and to develop their potential as individuals. Conducting a lesson for so many different students is a very demanding task and to do it well the teacher needs to meet the needs of most of them by using different teaching methods, materials, tasks, roles and management strategies during a lesson. This does not leave much space for conscious observation of each student's behaviour in the classroom. The diary data indicates that to be able to recognize and then to meet different types of students' cognitive and affective needs, the teacher needs to use all available means such as questionnaires, classroom surveys, project work and individual conversations with students to get to know the needs and expectations towards the teacher and the course that they have.

7th of April ***Inspired teaching***

'I eagerly waited for the beginning of the lesson this morning especially as I planned to start a unit devoted to sports and hobbies – my favourite topic. One of the first tasks I gave to my first grade students was to walk around the classroom and ask their peers about the hobbies they had and the sports they practised. Their task was to collect information from other

classmates in order to get to know one another better and to provide me with useful knowledge concerning my students' interests. Then, they were expected to relate back to me what they managed to find out about their peers. It is so exciting and inspiring that each lesson I am given a chance to get to know something new about the young people I meet with a few times a week. I would never expect that shy Jakub is the member of the Brotherhood of Knights, or that Iwona is the leader of a group of scouts, or that Jagoda loves being a cheerleader 'performing' at the matches of our local football team. I learned all of this today thanks to just one activity which was carried out.'

The analysis of this particular entry shows how easy and exciting for teachers it may be to collect information 'about' students which is crucial for building a rapport with them and for effective planning of the teaching process. It seems to be very important for ensuring successful classroom interaction if teachers play in the classrooms the role of researchers of who the students are. In this way they are able to use information about students when, for example, preparing teaching materials with the view to making language tasks personalised and meaningful to students.

3.2.2 Raising learner's motivation

29th of September ***Personalisation***

'As I planned to do some revision exercises concerning the use of the Present Simple tense in the first grade, I thought that appropriate selection of the materials to be used during the lesson would facilitate gathering new information about my students. I wanted to use the information to create an individual student's profile. Thus, I gave each student a slip of paper with a different question in the Present Simple tense written on it, e.g. "What kind of films do you like watching the most?" or "What do you like doing in your spare time". Then, they were given five minutes to ask this question to their peers. After that time they were supposed to report back to me what they had learned. By doing this activity the students had a chance to revise the grammatical tense and I had a chance to learn new things about them. At the end of the lesson I gave them a list of sentences in Polish and asked them to translate the sentences into English. Every sentence included some information about one particular student. They were really excited hearing that the sentences were about them.'

The analysis of the entry demonstrates that what appears to be one of the most effective ways of motivating students to work is making the language tasks meaningful to them. There are many different ways a teacher may use to do this. One of these is frequent incorporating of personal information about students into the language tasks to be done, e.g. sentences to be translated. This method works really well as students feel that when, for example, a teacher creates a sentence that says something about them, means that they - as individual beings with their own hobbies, personalities and passions are important to him/her.

Preparing 'personalised' language tasks for students, i.e. tasks which not only aim at meeting their needs and expectations but also include personal information about them contributes to their higher motivation to learn the FL. Also it gives students a perfect opportunity to get to know their peers better and so to strengthen relationships within the group.

4th of January A passionate discussion

'I started the lesson with my third grade students asking them to comment upon the execution of Saddam Husajn which had been broadcast in the news a few days before. As always, I expected only few comments but surprisingly my question triggered a fierce discussion concerning the death penalty. As the language skills of this particular group of students were quite high, I could hear them exchanging opinions almost exclusively in English. Only sometimes did they use some Polish words if they did not know the English equivalent, as they were so involved in the discussion that they did not have time to ask me about the unknown vocabulary items. I planned to present the Past Perfect Tense today but I gave up. I found it much more exciting to learn what my students' views on the death penalty and life in general were and what language they used to express the views.'

The teacher's awareness of both the opinions that students hold about different issues and the values which count in their lives may be very beneficial for the development of successful classroom discourse, as it facilitates the selection of teaching materials and the choice of those which students may find important and interesting, e.g. euthanasia or cloning. What is more, the teacher not only has a chance to learn from students the opinions they hold on various issues, but also to present his/her own views and to contribute in this way to building his/her authority in the students' eyes.

The entry indicates that young people want to discuss current issues and do not mind doing this in a foreign language if only they are given the chance to share with the teacher and

the peers their own opinions. Such form of work, relevant to students' interests, not only contributes to raising their motivation to learn but also gives them the opportunity to express what they really want to say in a FL and at the same time to learn the opinions of their peers, which is important not only to their language development, but also to the development of themselves as individuals.

The observations of students' behaviour during classes, surveys carried out in the classroom as well as chatting with students make it possible for the teacher to learn what topics students find interesting to talk about and which they perceive to be boring. For example, environmental issues are the pet hate of many students and, as a consequence, they claim to find words connected with the topic difficult to learn and remember. This knowledge can certainly help the teacher to understand the one possible source of language difficulties that students may experience.

In their attempt to find the best ways to motivate students to learn teachers need to bear in mind that, asAllwright (1979) states, they are not fully responsible for all their students' motivation, as in spite of the effort put into encouraging them to work, it is up to the students to decide whether to learn or not. Rogers (1996:61) agrees with this argument and explains that students' motivation not only fluctuates over time, but that it can sometimes be increased and directed into completel the students' motivation, it is also the teacher's task to observe how this changes, which way it is directed and even why it sometimes disappears in order to be able to stimulate students' interest in the FL effectively.

10th of May A successful choice

'The objective of the lesson with the second grade students was to revise 'to be going to' construction. I prepared copies of some exercises to be distributed to the students but since the very beginning of the lesson they seemed to be sleepy and not interested in doing any grammar at all. I decided not to give them the exercises but instead I divided them into groups and gave each group a set of pictures with drawings of different types of activities on them. Then I asked the students to mime the activities they had in the pictures in front of the members of the other groups. Every activity correctly guessed by the students received a score. The students loved the game and laughed a lot when 'demonstrating' and making guesses about the activities being mimed. Thanks to the game the lesson turned out to be a success.'

As this entry shows, teachers' awareness of their students' mood and their flexibility in adjusting the lesson plan to how the students feel in the classroom is very important both for the classroom discourse and the teaching-learning process. Lack of this awareness resulting form insufficient observations of students during lessons or teachers' lack of sensitivity to recognize students' moods may result in both teachers' complete failure to realise the lesson objectives and in students' feeling of anxiousness.

Students' reactions to their teacher's instructions expressed by them both by the use of verbal and non-verbal means. These reactions are necessary to observe as the conclusions formulated on the basis of the observations make the teacher more flexible in planning and conducting lessons. The ability to meet students' needs more effectively, which may be developed by means of classroom observation, may help teachers to predict more precisely which stage of a given lesson students might have found troublesome, or simply boring. This will give teachers the chance to prepare in advance a few additional options of activities of different levels of difficulty, or simply of different focus, for example more personalised and meaningful to students to be used in the lesson to raise their motivation to learn and to get rid of problems standing in the way of achieving the lesson objectives and learners' progress.

What teachers may appreciate when teaching a foreign language to teenagers is the help of different language games, quizzes, etc. both in changing students' mood during the lesson and in raising their motivation to learn. Having a 'bank' of games divided into grammatical and lexical categories, depending on the purpose they may serve, not only facilitates teachers' work but also makes the lesson more interesting and entertaining for students. Focusing their attention on the use of language games and other resources as motivators in the FL teaching teachers need to remember, however, that a language game only serves its purpose if students themselves find it attractive. What is more, the game needs to be carefully selected to match the objectives of the lesson. Also, the rules of the game must be easy to remember and follow. If they are too difficult, students' interest will drop very quickly and it will turn out that using the game is a waste of time.

3.2.3 Attending to the learner

9th of September ***Overwhelmed Monika***

'When I looked at Monika - my first grade student, a few times during the lesson today I saw each time the same expression on her face. At first I thought that she was looking at me with amazement because both her eyes and her mouth were half open. I could not have been more

wrong! One more look at her and I knew that she was not amazed but rather scared to death. After the lesson I asked her what the problem was and she explained that I spoke so fast that she could not understand a word. I feel guilty. I am sometimes too much focused on myself conducting the lesson and forget that my task is meeting my students', not my own needs, first.'

As the presented entry demonstrates, in teachers' attempt to ensure successful classroom discourse they need to concentrate their efforts on how to be attentive to hear and see not only verbal, but also non-verbal, signals sent by students. Ignoring students' reactions to the teacher's classroom behaviour and not reflecting upon the needs that they might have in a particular lesson may be the reason for their students' withdrawal. This withdrawal may even lead to unnecessary lesson breakdowns. Being an attentive observer appears to be as important as being an attentive listener.

19th of November ***Self-repair***

'Today, the objective of the lesson with my first grade students was to introduce the Present Perfect tense. To elicit from the students what they knew about the tense I asked them to tell me when it was used. Radek was the only student who raised his hand. I knew Radek was a good student, very good at doing all types of writing tasks but having difficulties to express his thoughts and ideas in a clear way when speaking. As I had no other option I asked him to answer my question. Radek started explaining quite clearly in what situations the tense was used when suddenly he started talking about the Past Simple instead of the Present Perfect time expressions. When he looked at my face expressing surprise and disapproval, he stopped speaking. I immediately wanted to correct the mistake he had made but first I looked at him and smiled. When I was just about to start correcting, Radek remembered the information he needed and corrected the mistake by himself. I was glad that he was faster than me. When he finished, he looked very proud of himself.'

Teachers, as knowledge-givers and lesson managers, may sometimes have to struggle with themselves when trying to listen to a student's erroneous response to a given question to the very end and to resist temptation to interrupt, correct immediately or ask for clarification. The analysis of the diary demonstrates that being patient with students by, for example giving them more time to say what they want in the target language, leads to better communication

with them and to their greater openness to the teacher and willingness to speak without the fear of being 'attacked' with questions and corrections.

Diary entries show that attending to the learner needs to be understood more globally, as willingness to devote the teacher's off-lesson time to try to get to know the learner and that it should not only be narrowed to the lesson context. All those moments of 'private conversation' with individual students give the teacher a chance to 'enter' the students' lives and understand their classroom behaviour. The time devoted to 'private talks' never appears to be wasted. It is almost always beneficial for the teacher giving him/her better to understanding of who the learners are and what problems they have in school and private lives. The short moments spent on sincere conversations with the teacher are also beneficial for learners, giving them a feeling of security – they can tell the teacher honestly why they are, for example, not prepared for the lesson without the fear of being laughed off. They also learn that talking with the teacher does not mean escaping punishment for neglecting school duties, but rather they develop certainty that the teacher cares about them personally, trusts them and expects them to take responsibility for their own actions.

It appears that a talk with the student(s) carried out in a friendly atmosphere is a good reaction of the teacher to students' disruptive behaviour, their lack of progress, or attention as it helps to solve school problems experienced by students constructively without creating in them a feeling of inferiority. The analysis of the diary indicates that application of such a solution in the case of problems with individual learners strengthens their trust in their teacher as well.

3.3 The teacher's feedback to learner language production

3.3.1 Feedback to error

11th of December The art of gentle correction

'I like revision lessons conducted before a particular language group takes a test. One of such lessons has just ended. Why do I like them? Well, the fact that my students try to do a number of tasks prepared for them makes it possible for me to see what they can do well and which areas still need some 'brushing up' before the test. However, revising language material is always connected with correcting students' mistakes. Today I tried to focus on the way I did this. The first thought that comes to mind in connection with the observations made is that I tried hard to sound natural. I used to be a student myself and I know how one may feel when being corrected: uncomfortable, uneasy, anxious or maybe even hopeless. I did not want my

students to feel bad when being corrected so I tried to stand a few steps from the bench of a speaking student in order to reduce the distance between him/her and me to make the person feel as if a friend and not a know-it-all teacher was correcting him/her. Then I repeated the sentence said by the student up to the moment when the mistake was made to give him/her the chance to correct it by him/herself. It was also important for me not to sound artificial just to be able to assure students with my voice that their mistakes and errors were a natural stage of their learning process. I did all of this not to discourage my students from speaking or 'making attempts' at doing language tasks themselves. I know that harsh correction may have a very negative influence on students' motivation to learn as I also used to be a teenager who was very sensitive to the comments of others. I cannot deny, however, that sometimes I am really irritated that my students cannot understand a grammar rule that, according to me, is easy to grasp. These are the moments when I feel like forgetting about gentle correction…'

This entry shows that correcting students' mistakes and errors requires from the teacher a lot of skill, as well as knowledge of who the students are, in order to be able to do it without hurting or upsetting them. It is only possible to do this if the teacher pays attention to all factors involved in correction, both verbal and non-verbal, such as the teacher's posture, pitch of voice and the facial expressions, which accompany the appropriate selection of words used to correct. The analysis of the diary reveals that correcting students' language performance brings best effects when:

1. the teacher gives a student a chance to correct his/her mistake because as Harmer (2001) notices, students 'frequently have a very clear idea of how well they are doing or have done'. The opportunity to find and correct his/her own mistake gives a student a sense of achievement that s/he needs when learning
2. the teacher keeps a certain distance from a speaking student (usually a few steps from the student's bench) so that when the student makes a mistake the physical proximity of the teacher does not deepen the student's stress created by the situation of being corrected
3. the teacher keeps eye contact with a student when s/he speaks and then, when correcting the mistakes made, s/he addresses the whole group of students, so that the one being corrected, although concentrating on the teacher's words, does not feel 'branded' in the eyes of his/her peers

4. the teacher smiles and addresses the student with a soft, clear voice as this gives students the impression that making mistakes is not a personal tragedy, but a natural stage of the foreign language learning process.

In order not to discourage students from speaking, the teacher needs to remember to correct students with tact and discretion (gentle correction) being aware of how easy it is to discourage them from attempting to communicate, especially in the foreign language they are not fully competent in. What may also appear to be effective when correcting students' language performance is to ask other students to correct their peer's mistake. This way students become more independent of the teacher's corrections and thus more autonomous which enhances their self-evaluation.

3.3.2 Expressing approval and disapproval

5th of October ***Patrycja's success***

'Since September I have been paying a lot of attention to one of my students – Patrycja. She was one of the phantom students I have taught in the second form. This girl is a very quiet and shy person who never even 'opens her mouth' unless asked. When I started teaching her language group a year before, I hadn't expected I would teach a person with some serious learning problems. I learned from the school psychologist that in gymnasium Patrycja had to undergo a medical treatment connected with some kind of medical disorder. She has always been a very poor learner and in fact, the poorest learner of all I have ever taught. Surprisingly, today she finally got an 'A' for her test. I feel that apart from her own effort it was also the way I had been treating her and talking to her in the classroom and outside it for over a year that contributed to her success. Knowing that she was a very timid girl I always came to her bench a few times during each lesson to give her my guidance, support and praise on what she was doing. I used to encourage her to work saying: 'Well done', 'Good job' and 'Excellent' to convince her that she was doing well. I also used to talk to her during breaks about different topics like the weather, her mood and other students, just to let her know that she was noticed in the group and that her being quiet did not mean being invisible to me. Today she smiled, probably for the first time in my lesson and I knew that it was a real 'breakthrough' to more active participation in the classroom life. What she needed was someone who would help her believe in herself. I think that I could be that person.

Because I believe in the ego-enhancing and motivating effect of teachers' approval, I decided to talk to Patrycja more and praise her using both verbal and non-verbal means every time she managed to answer my question in English. I think Patrycja is the best example of what a therapeutic value teachers' praise has on students. Last year she did not even want to look at me and she failed almost every test. This term she got 'B' in reading and two 'A''s in vocabulary tests. I am proud of this "new" Patrycja.'

The entry presented above indicates that the way the teacher uses language when talking to students has a great influence on the quality of classroom interaction, in that the teachers can increase students' self-esteem by sharing with them the belief that they are worth care, attention and support in reaching their aims. The teacher, however, can also make the students withdraw and fail in learning the language if s/he is not aware of the fact that the way s/he addresses them and talks to them during lessons does not always meet the students' needs and expectations making it hard for them to accept it.

It seems that one of the most popular forms of expressing approval, which is rewarding students with a good mark for their language performance, may not always be the best way to raise students' self-esteem. School marks are very important, but they are at the same time 'deprived of soul' – what they express is just information on how well the student did the assigned task. The drawback of this assessment system is that the marks given to students are not personalised. What may turn out to be more effective encouragement for students to learn the FL is to complete, or 'support', the marks with the teacher's own personal comment, either in the oral or written form depending on the kind of performance, or feedback required.

3.4 Management of the teaching-learning process

3.4.1 Teacher roles in the FL classroom

22nd of March A preaching teacher

'Today during the lesson with the second grade I had to take the role of a 'preacher' again and remind the students of all the long and short term aims that they had to reach and for which they needed English. The reason for my 'preaching' was simple – almost half of the students in the group did not do their homework claiming that they had simply forgotten to do it. I felt that I definitely had to do something about that situation. However, instead of punishing them for their lack of homework, I asked them to prepare sheets of paper and write down the reasons why they thought it was worth learning English. They gave me plenty of

examples. It was my intention to make them self-reflect upon their future plans. To make them aware that what they learn will be important and useful in their lives I organised a brainstorming activity. I drew a spidergram - a simple drawing resembling a spider's net on the board and asked the students to come up with different ideas concerning the practical applications of the ability to read numbers in English in their present and future live as their homework was connected with reading numbers in the FL. I think I reached my aim. I am afraid, however, that in the next two weeks I will probably have to repeat all the procedure of motivating, or as I call it, extra-boosting again as I discovered that many of my students were "quick-forgetters" of what I said to them.

I do not like direct 'preaching' and I know that my students do not like it, too. Who does?! Talking (almost regularly) about how important something is and persuading others to do it, or to learn it, may be frustrating in the long run. I know, however, that if I do not make my students aware of the benefits they can have from learning a foreign language, they will not study (especially now when the weather is so beautiful outside!). Each time their motivation drops, I try again to show them that they need, or will need, English. In most cases motivating students to learn by bringing some extra materials into the classroom is enough to make them interested in learning again. However, sometimes they simply need to be told over and over again that what they learn is important for both their professional and personal development.'

The entry presented above indicates that one of the roles that teachers need to play in the classroom is that of a 'guard' who keeps a watchful eye both on the students' language progress and the level of their motivation to learn. It seems that teachers need to be constantly ready to help their students re-discover the benefits of FL competence for their lives whenever s/he can see that their motivation to learn drops.

The analysis of the diary makes it possible to identify the roles the teacher plays in the foreign language classroom most and least frequently. It also helps to raise awareness of the reasons behind the choices of the roles taken. The roles which are played most frequently appear to be those of the researcher and needs analyst who, by means of class surveys or other methods of collecting data such as face-to-face talks with individual students, tries to get to know what the students' needs and preferences are. The information obtained in this way may be then used by the teacher to plan the language course more effectively.

It seems that empathising with students frequently makes the teacher take the role of an 'adviser', giving a helping hand to students who are having problems, either at school, or in

their private lives (Appendix , No.5). The observations described in the diary demonstrate that students expect their teachers to play this role regularly in the classroom, as it appears to give them the feeling of security they need to be able to develop as language learners and also individual people.

The diary analysis indicates that the choice of roles played during a particular lesson depends not only on the stage of the lesson and its language objectives but also, as Harmer (2001) observes, on who the students are, and what personal preferences a particular teacher has in connection with the choice of the classroom roles. However, in spite of the fact that a teacher may prefer to play some roles more often than the others for most of the lesson time, the roles of instruction giver and discipline keeper have to be played on regular basis in the classroom so as not to let the students 'ruin' the lesson.

What is more, it is worth noticing that the choices of roles to be played in the classroom, although uniquely personal and based upon the teacher's own beliefs about teaching, need to be based on the language group profile in order to be effective. Thus, one of the requirements of the teaching profession seems to be not only teaching students the foreign language but also getting to know them as individuals and group members. Otherwise, the teachers' effort is doomed to failure, as both the group and the individual students' profiles appear to play a crucial role in making classroom discourse successful.

Although, as mentioned above, the choice of the classroom roles is influenced by the teacher's personality and his/her beliefs about teaching, it needs to be remembered that students also come to school with certain beliefs and expectations connected with the person of a teacher. They usually want him/her to be open, friendly and supportive towards them. Thus, to meet those expectations teachers, especially when tired or upset, may need to go into 'performance' mode and play being more cheerful or happy than they really are at that moment. This belief that at times a teacher needs to be an actor in the classroom is highlighted by Harmer (1995). He claims that during their lessons, teachers generally behave more energetically, humorously and creatively than they really are. Knowing what needs the students have makes it easier for the teacher to behave in a way that would meet their expectations.

3.4.2 Managing classroom interaction

3rd of June Student grouping problems

'I wanted the lesson to be interesting and exciting at the same time. As we had talked about different kinds of shops during the previous lesson, I decided to prepare a speaking activity connected with shopping. I divided the students into groups followed by careful consideration of who the members of each particular group should be and gave them lists of questions to be answered. There are only two boys in this particular language group so I expected the lesson to be a success as most girls love talking about shopping. However, it turned out to be just the contrary. Although all the female students set off to work quite enthusiastically, soon I noticed that some of the girls from the first group were only reading the questions with a blank look in their eyes while the girls from the second group were speaking only in Polish (!). The students in the third group were listening to the most talkative girl in the class with the silent satisfaction that she was doing all the work for them and only the students in the fourth group were trying to answer the questions provided and, which was the most important to me, they tried to do it in English. I did not really know what to start with to reach my lesson objectives.

First, I praised the students from the fourth group for doing a good job, and then I told Magda from the third group to let others speak as well. Next, I reminded the students from the second group that it was an English lesson and that I expected them to use this language to do the task. Finally, I had some time to sit down among the students from the first group to learn that they did not really have much to say about shopping, as it was not their favourite topic!!!

It is the break now and I am exhausted. My carefully planned group arrangement has to be changed again. When will I manage to carry out at least one successful lesson in this class? I don't know. The only thing I am aware of is that I must learn more about the group composition and try to choose the patterns for classroom work more carefully than I did today. Now I think that pair work could have worked better for this activity…'

This entry demonstrates that it is very important for the teacher to observe how his/her students interact with one another during a lesson to be able to ensure successful classroom discourse. An active observation of the way that students react to teacher's instructions concerning different student groupings to be used in the classroom makes it possible for him/her to determine what the students' favourite interaction patterns are. This knowledge allows him/her to form pairs and groups of learners in the way that may bring about the best learning results. For example, according to the observations made, some alienated students I taught worked quite well when co-operating with social students.

30th of March ***David's 'confession'***

'Today, I wanted the first grade students to revise the vocabulary that had been covered a lesson before. I divided them into groups and asked them to choose one person in it to mime or draw the meaning of different words from the lists distributed to them in front of other students in each group. Surprisingly for me, and for my student, Dawid, as well, he was chosen to be the 'performer' by other members of his group. I was surprised because Dawid's group decision seemed to me to be a breakthrough in his relationship with peers.

Since the very first lesson of the school year my first grade student – Dawid, had been sitting alone in the last bench near the window. He had seemed to be interested neither in the lesson nor in the social life around him. I had often noticed that instead of working, he had just kept looking through the window. Asked to answer my question he had sometimes appeared to be unaware of the fact that some question had been asked. I had contacted a school psychologist to get some information about his family background and learning history. I was informed that Dawid was an average student coming from a typical family. He had neither serious problems with learning nor with his contacts with parents and siblings. However, I still could not understand why Dawid kept all his classmates at bay. Since the conversation with the psychologist I started paying more attention to Dawid to make sure he was always busy doing the assigned task. What is more, I tried to choose students' groupings in such a way that Dawid was always given a chance to co-operate with different students, at first those who were perceived by other group members to be friendly and caring. I discovered that the main reason why he was so alienated in the group was his almost 'paralysing' shyness that he experienced in his contacts with peers. Soon I noticed that Dawid's relationship with his peers improved. What is more, he seemed to be more interested in learning and motivated to work with his classmates.

Today, I saw that Dawid was shocked but pleased with the decision of the group. After the break he left the classroom with those students he had worked with during the lesson. He seemed to be so excited about his new company that he even forgot to say 'goodbye' to me. I did not mind it at all, though.'

As can be learnt from this entry, isolated and alienated students seem to profit best from a lesson when the teacher supervises them closely, as otherwise they often simply stop working and become only passive observers of what happens in the classroom. What seems to be obvious and still, as the diary data shows, works best with isolated or alienated students who are quite frequently poor achievers, is to give them tasks which are relatively easy to complete, just to keep them busy and let them have some satisfaction from doing the tasks by

themselves. As the sense of satisfaction contributes to the students' well being in the classroom, it therefore also has a positive influence on the students' level of participation in the lesson. Until their affective needs are met, the students are unable to concentrate on their cognitive needs, as Maslow claims (1970). He explains that without meeting lower order needs it is not possible to appreciate the challenges involved in meeting other, for example, intellectual needs. Thus, if teachers are not aware of their own social preferences, the alienated and phantom students in the language group may be neglected. The analysis of different entries included in the diary indicates that it may be a tendency of some teachers, including myself, to address the social and task-oriented students more frequently than the others during the lesson, because of their willingness to co-operate. When reflecting upon managing classroom interaction it is possible to draw the conclusion that, although teachers may try hard to treat all the students equally, the differences in their preferred interaction styles may influence the attitude they have towards the students to some extent.

It appears that in order to ensure successful classroom interaction, great effort needs to be taken on the part of the teacher to constantly give his/her support to the dependent, isolated and alienated learners, as this is what they expect from him/her. Teachers also need to be aware of a group composition as the wrong choice of students' arrangement for the tasks assigned may spoil even the most attractive lesson. It needs to be remembered, however, that as Harmer states (2001), each grouping has both its advantages and disadvantages which must be taken into consideration when selecting the groupings to be used in the particular language group.

The question of classroom interaction also concerns the teacher's talking time in the classroom. The observations described in the diary indicate that when doing different communicative tasks together with the teacher, students usually speak less than when working in pairs or groups. It may be concluded that two possible reasons for the situation can be students' stress that prevents them from speaking to the teacher-interlocutor and not enough opportunities to practice speaking that the teacher creates. This observation indicates that the process of regular self-reflection, such as the one triggered by the need to write the diary on regular basis, may make some teachers aware of how much of the lesson time they spend talking. This awareness, in turn, may help them notice the need to organise more group and pair work activities, which reduce the dominance of the teacher over the class and make him/her work more as a facilitator and consultant, rather than as a knowledge-giver and a 'speaker'.

3.4.3 Maintaining classroom discipline

17th of November The Code of Conduct

'The lesson was a nightmare. Now it is over. What remained in the empty classroom is my splitting headache and the feeling of a complete failure. I feel awful. The third grade students, mostly boys who prefer playing football to learning English, have been very hard to discipline from the very beginning of the school year. The lesson started quite well but after ten minutes it was ruined when Bartek came in claiming that he did not have his homework and the course-book because his rucksack had been stolen the day before. He wanted me to believe that dirty lie. Not to 'provoke' unnecessary conversation that could spoil my lesson I told him that I understood his problem and asked him to describe the whole event in the essay form, which was supposed to be a kind of punishment for being late. The students from this particular language group decided at the very beginning of the school year, when creating the class Code of Conduct, that if somebody was late for the lesson s/he would have to write an essay. However, Bartek refused to do this claiming that the idea of the Code of Conduct was stupid. The same moment other students started expressing similar opinions. Although I asked them to stop talking, they did not want to listen to me and behaved quite noisily. I felt helpless and for the first time in my teaching career I did not know what to do. I simply sat down and waited. When they saw I was not interested in them, they gradually calmed down. I lost fifteen minutes of the lesson waiting for silence in the classroom. The next 25 minutes were devoted to re-formulating the Code of Conduct. Although I am glad that the withdrawal strategy I used worked, I feel bad, too because I always promised myself to be active and take the initiative to solve the problem in the situation like this. Now I know I am not prepared to deal with different discipline problems.'

This entry demonstrates that apart from a direct rebellion against the teacher-executor of rules, which is so characteristic for the period of adolescence, another reason why discipline problems occurred during the lesson was students' curiosity whether the teacher could defend the parameters of control that s/he wanted to establish or not. Appel (1995:30) claims that the period of testing a new teacher is a natural stage that takes place every time a new teacher enters a group. What he also suggests in the situation of 'being tested' is that teachers need to act quickly if they want to establish their authority.

The analysis of the entry presented here indicates that whether the teacher has problems with keeping discipline in the classroom, or not, may be connected with the way s/he reacted

to the students' behaviour in the first few lessons of the language course in that particular language group. Wadd (1973) claims that 'what happens in the first few encounters with the pupils is likely to establish the relationship which he will have to live with for the rest of his contact with that particular class.'

Reflecting upon different discipline problems experienced when teaching, the teacher may come to the conclusion that the fact s/he lost control over the group of students is due to treating them more as partners than learners, being too open to their ideas and too prone to negotiate the content of the lesson with them in his/her attempt to build a good rapport. Robertson (2002:51) argues that teachers should not put the pupils at ease too early, as this may constitute the source of discipline problems. Appel (1995) claims that as the first encounters with students are so important for establishing the parameters of classroom interaction probably for the rest of the school year, teachers need to pay a lot of attention to their body language, keeping in mind that little things such as single words, a smile or a gaze may turn out to be a real 'time bombs' later in the school year.

Analysing the diary it is possible to draw the conclusion that it is necessary to teach students the rules governing classroom interaction and that the rules need to be first negotiated with students and then changed and updated depending on how the students change. The incident described, which may be perceived by some to be a professional failure, was an eye-opening event for me in demonstrating how important it is to present the group with a Code of Conduct including rules which would not be too 'gentle' for the particular group of students.

3.5 Final remarks on the diary data

Although time consuming and requiring very systematic work, diary writing contributes to the teacher's professional development into a more mature teacher. Self-reflecting upon teaching as well as verbalising the teacher's thoughts and observations connected with his/her classroom performance raises awareness of what attitudes to and beliefs about him/herself, teaching as a profession and the learners are as many of them are not necessarily explicit to the teacher before. This is evident in my diary writing experience.

I see my growth in much greater awareness of the verbal and non-verbal aspects of my teaching. Reflecting upon the way I teach triggered by the process of writing made me a more attentive observer of how my students react to my behaviour in the classroom. Before I started writing I was convinced that all my students approve of and accept my style of teaching.

More careful observation of what was happening in the classroom helped me to realise that some students might have been overwhelmed by my behaviour characterised by what I understand as ‘naturalness’ and great openness to them. Now I know that there are students among those I teach who expect from the teacher to be more ‘controlable’ and ‘predictable’ in his/her reactions.

I can also classify different stages I went through on my way to be a mature teacher. From insecurity of a novice teacher who wants to build her authority by speaking very loudly and wearing formal clothes to a more relaxed professional who derives pleasure from genuine contacts with students and from creative teaching.

Additionaly, I am more aware now that my deepest belief about teaching which influences my classroom behaviour a lot is that its main objective is helping students to understand themselves as teenagers and the world around them to make them realise their human potential. I believe that this may be done through involving them in the process of FL learning. In other words, I perceive teaching as a ‘tool’ to help my students ‘explore’ both the internal world of their thoughts and feelings and the external world with all the challenges facing young people.

As for teaching itself, I learned that I need to devote more attention to the pace of the lesson as it sometimes goes beyond my learners’ ability to follow. The process of diary writing made me also aware of the need to take more measures to ‘explore’ the dynamics of each group I teach. Although I carry out mini-scale projects and give my students communicative tasks aimed at getting to know individual learners I need to focus more on discovering what role each student plays in the structure of the group to plan pair- and group-work better, and also to be able to use natural leaders on one hand and to help alienated students to integrate with the group on the other hand. I learned that the awareness of group dynamics is also the key to being able to control the group more effectively .

Although the diary presented and analysed above is a complete piece of writing, I still keep ‘jotting down’ my observations as now I know how valuable systematic reflection is for becoming a better and more professional teacher.

As the diary writer in this study, I moved through different phases of the teacher development: from being overenthusiastic about teaching but not aware of many things, to a phase of more mature professional self-reflection and building a rapport with students on the basis of this newly gained knowledge. The analysis shows that these phases were determined by a systematic and scrutinised diary writing process. It is not difficult to show relatedness between these phases, as they constituted the natural sequence of events triggered by the

process of writing. As can be easily concluded, the diary writing, followed by the analysis of the collected data, contributed to my professional growth by making it more explicit. Each teacher has a set of beliefs which shape his/her professional life but it was the process of the diary analysis which made me aware of what my own set of beliefs was. It also helped me to see how some of my views about teaching changed as I learned more about myself, my students and the classroom discourse. In other words, regular self-reflection triggered by the process of diary writing made me able to define my didactic style and therefore also mysell as a FL teacher.

Appel (1995) claims that the process of diary writing and its analysis helps teachers to gain knowledge that they would not possibly acquire if they did not decide to write. What I have learned from the reflection upon my assumptions and experiences when writing the diary seem to confirm this theory. Regular reflection upon my teaching made it easier for me to identify the areas that required improvement. It also helped me to recognize the influence that different psycho- and sociolinguistic factors have on my teaching.

Different observations and experiences which led to shifts in my perception of teaching that one can learn about when reading my diary, constitute a kind of knowledge which is, in my opinion, as important and helpful as the knowledge concerning, for example, curriculum or methodology. The diary writing helped me to understand who I was as a language teacher, and what my beliefs as well as professional aims were.

Chapter IV Focusing on classroom discourse: conclusions and implications

Introduction

The most important part of any process of communication is the exchange of information between the sender and the receiver. Teaching a foreign language is a perfect example of such a two-way process. During language classes teachers-senders share their knowledge with students-message receivers in the process of interaction with the foreign language being both the purpose and means of the communication act. However, it needs to be remembered that in this process teachers are not only message senders but also receivers as they get from their students feedback on their classroom performance.

Successful communication results from effective classroom interaction as it depends on observing the procedures for interpersonal contact on which the process of communication is based. The procedures are influenced by different factors of psychological and social nature that play a significant role in the process of sending and receiving information by the participants in the communication act. Thus, to ensure effective foreign language classroom discourse, teachers need to be aware of the basic procedures governing interpersonal communication, the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects involved in classroom interaction and, above all, they must be aware of their own beliefs, attitudes, skills and patterns of verbal and non-verbal behaviour in the classroom. This self-knowledge is crucial for teachers as it facilitates their understanding of how these aspects affect classroom discourse. It also helps teacher to successfully apply the rules governing the process of communication when interacting with students.

The main focus of this study was to make teachers reflect and become more aware of how certain psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors influence classroom interaction. The second objective of the project was to help the sample group of teachers participating in the project realise how their classroom behaviour was assessed by their students and what expectations these students had towards their English teachers in terms of their classroom behaviour. The analysis of the collected data was presented in Chapter III, while this chapter presents conclusions that can be drawn on the basis of the research findings. Although some of the findings presented may be perceived as obvious and predictable, yet, they support the theory presented in Chapter I and other studies conducted. Also, it is hoped that the

conclusions drawn on the basis of the findings will generate a discussion among FL teachers concerning both teachers' awareness of how they themselves perceive their work and how their learners perceive it. It is also believed that the findings will make teachers more aware of the influence that the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors elaborated upon in this thesis have on foreign language classroom discourse.

This chapter consists of two parts: the first presents the psycholinguistic and the second part discusses the sociolinguistic factors together with their implications for teacher-learner classroom interaction. The diagnosed and discussed psycho- and sociolinguistic factors which appear to influence the classroom discourse (interaction) most significantly are presented in Table 24.

	Psycholinguistic factors	**Sociolinguistic factors**
Student related factors	- student attitudes to English as a school subject - student motivation to learn - student age and stage of psychological development - student affective needs	- student family background - student perceptions of the value of education in life - language group profile and individual student profiles
Teacher related factors	- teacher personality - teacher attitudes to and beliefs about teaching - teacher individual style of teaching - teacher professional self-assessment	- teacher family background and learning history - the way teacher uses his/her verbal and non-verbal language to: 1) express approval and disapproval of student performance 2) keep discipline in the classroom 3) assess student work

Table 24 Factors influencing classroom discourse

The concluding comments and implications resulting from the study findings and proposed in this chapter aim at raising foreign language teachers' awareness of not only the factors which influence classroom interaction but also of the need to become a reflective practitioner by regular self-reflecting upon one's own teaching. The ultimate goal is to help the teachers become better and more effective professionals.

1. Psycholinguistic factors

1.1 Student-related factors

1.1.1 Student attitudes to English as a school subject

It is generally known that most students come to their secondary classrooms with different attitudes to English as a school subject, which are shaped mainly by the experiences they had learning the language in the primary school and gymnasium. These attitudes are not, however, stable features and they undergo changes over time, because students develop as language learners and individuals. A teacher may therefore modify each student's attitude to English and to him/herself either positively, or negatively, depending on his/her classroom performance. There are different ways that the teachers may use to influence their students' views of English so that it can be perceived as worth learning.

One of the most important things that teachers need to do is to show students how English, *lingua franca* of international communication, can be used both in their present lives, but also in their future. Giving students opportunities to use the foreign language in practice makes their motivation to learn increase rapidly. Thus, the important thing for FL teachers is to be aware that they are expected by their students to create opportunities to use the language communicatively, by letting them practice speaking English in the classroom in situations simulating real life, so that they would feel confident enough to use the language outside school.

As the data demonstrates, it seems to be more effective to promote co-operation than competition in the classroom (and beyond) in ensuring students' positive attitude to English. Peer comments about a student in the context of the school progress s/he makes constitute a very important factor that stimulates the student's motivation to learn. In the case of students with good and very good learning results, the admiration and respect a peer group expresses towards them influence their self-evaluation and result in encouraging them to make an effort to learn the foreign language. however, as Beebe (1983) observes, in the case of those students who are usually poor achievers it is possible to notice that their attitude to the foreign language sometimes changes from positive to negative if the focus of most classroom activities is competition, as they are not given enough support from their peers. If they do not understand the rules governing the usage of the FL and cannot apply them correctly, their classmates frequently do not want to work with them in one pair or group when doing language activities focused on quick task achievement. This is what makes their self-assessment, as well as their motivation to learn drop.

In this study two-thirds of all the students express the view that the level of their satisfaction with English classes, and thus their attitude to the subject, is very much connected with the way the teachers conduct their lessons. Students' opinions reveal that what they perceive to be the measure of success in learning the FL is the ability to speak it fluently and therefore what they expect from their English teachers is not only giving interesting lessons, but also creating a chance for them to practice speaking English in the classroom, either with their classmates, or with the teacher him/herself. This requires teachers to pay more attention to how many speaking activities they include in each lesson. The students are aware of the fact that, no matter whether they will be shop assistants, or office workers by profession, they will need English mainly for speaking purposes. So, in order to meet the students' needs, the stress of the foreign language lesson should always be shifted more to the practical use of English in everyday communication. The teachers may find the best ways to organise communicative activities in their classrooms by conducting needs analysis surveys and mini-scale action research projects in their classes.

Another important conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of the responses provided by the students is that they expect the teacher to manage the lesson time effectively as this factor greatly influences their attitude to the course. Watching films or listening to music 'just for fun' without any follow-up activities prepared by the teacher is in the students' opinion 'a waste of time'. Erikson (1963) claims that a positive attitude to the subject is best stimulated when the teacher is able to 'apply' an appropriate kind of strategy to let the students express themselves at this particular stage of their development. The data collected indicates that what in the students' view may greatly contribute to their attitude to learning a FL is giving them language tasks which stimulate their creativity and in this way let them express themselves without the fear of being criticised. This, however, requires the teacher to be open to the students' creative expression and to express approval of it as it means for students accepting their individuality and originality.

To ensure students' language progress and, at the same time, possibly the best rapport, the teachers need to gain and use in practice the knowledge concerning their students' preferences for skills development. The analysis of the students' responses shows that out of all skills to be practised in the classroom, the group of students who like doing listening activities is the least numerous. Taking into consideration that 19% of the students assessed listening as the most difficult skill to master and that 65% have problems doing this type of exercise it is easy to draw the conclusion that the students are not very willing to spend time doing activities which they find difficult as they do not give them the sense of achievement,

which is so important for their well-being in the classroom. This inability to understand recordings may be a potential source of the students' inhibitions which, as Guoira (1980) suggests may negatively influence their motivation to communicate in a foreign language. To change this situation teachers may try to facilitate the development of listening skills, which are, apart from speaking, the basic skills for communication, by selecting listening activities more carefully so that they really comply with the language level of most students in the group. They could also adapt more songs for FL learning purposes, taking into consideration that teenagers nowadays are the generation of MTV and VIVA music and that understanding of the song lyrics may constitute a real challenge for many of them. The figures presented above may only change if teachers start introducing listening activities which would be more relevant to their students' interests and the actual level of their language competence.

The collected data indicates that the teachers need to be more aware of the fact that their students appreciate language activities involving co-operation and competition, especially if their efforts connected with completing the tasks are to be rewarded with a good mark. Thus, what they may try to do is to enliven the lesson with games and project work more. They need to remember, however, that apart from being aware of language objectives of the lesson that are to be realised, they also have to make the lesson appealing to students' interests and relevant in terms of their current and future needs. Otherwise, as the students themselves claim, such a lesson is only a waste of the teacher's effort as s/he will not be able to motivate students to concentrate on what is being taught.

In the attempt to shape students' attitudes to English and to encourage them to learn the language, the teachers may try to strengthen co-operation with parents making them aware of the importance of mastery of a foreign language today. The students' responses show that their parents' opinion about the subject, and also their supervision, constitute very important factors which influence the quality of the students' school work. The teachers may, for example, inform parents at the very beginning of their children's learning career at the secondary school of the requirements of the course, the system of evaluation used by the teacher and also about the methods of teaching to be applied. What is more, parents may be encouraged to contact the teacher regularly in order to discuss what language progress was made by their children in a given period of time. Informed parents seem to be a great support both for the teacher and for the students - motivating them to learn and helping them to overcome the tension and stress resulting from the need to cope with educational requirements.

1.1.2 Motivation to learn

The data indicates that the students' motivation to learn depends to a great extent on their attitude to English as a school subject. As mentioned earlier, the student questionnaire responses show that more than two-thirds of the students have a positive attitude to English and perceive it to be worth learning and useful for reaching their future objectives, especially those connected with their professional lives. However, the data collected indicates that the factor which most influences students' motivation to learn is development of their personal interests. Thus, what the teachers needs to remember about when working on developing their students' motivation is making the language more relevant to students' interests and everyday needs. Teachers working in different types of schools need to take into consideration the specificity of the context they work in with both individual and group profiles being sometimes completely different in different schools. In order to be effective motivators they need to collect information on who their students are and what interests they have to be able to present them the language material in the form that the students will find attractive to work on in the classroom and to learn at home. It is especially important in the case of poorly achieving and poorly motivated studens from the profiled secondary schools who may simply refuse to co-operate with the teacher and do the foreign language tasks which they perceive as too boring or too difficult to work on.

According to what Illich (1972: 56) claims, people learn mainly by 'participation' in a setting which is meaningful to them, and not solely by instruction which some of the teachers participating in the project seemed to be unaware of. It is students' devotion and willingness to spend long hours learning about what they find interesting and important that, according to what Ur (1996:286) suggests, makes teenagers the best language learners. However, being successful motivators requires teachers to possess knowledge of who the students are and what hobbies and passions they have.

The responses gathered from the students and the teachers indicate that some of the teachers seem to be unaware of the students' perception of the speaking skill as the genuine indicator of their FL learning success. It turns out that what the students expect their teachers to do is to include more communication activities in each lesson as these are thought by the students to be the 'most useful' part of the lesson. It was already Ellis (1987) who advocated this view and suggested that such activities might become the switch that takes language from the learnt into the acquired store. Stressing the importance of communication activities for

students' motivation, also Swain (1985: 249) claims that they play the role of 'activators', forcing students to think carefully how to best express what they 'wish to convey'.

One more thing that the teachers need to pay more attention to is developing their awareness of the fact that the students learn best, as mentioned earlier, when the learning environment is build upon co-operation more than competition among students. Although, according to what Nuttall (1996: 164) claims 'a slight sense of competition between students does no harm' to the classroom interaction and that competition, as an adrenaline booster, makes students do the language tasks fast and effectively, it seems to have an adverse effect on the internal group structure. Competition affects individual student's self-esteem, frequently introducing sharp divisions and negative emotions between 'good' and 'poor' language learners. Co-operation, on the other hand, reinforces the sense of belonging among students which is something that needs to be fostered by the teachers. According to Hadfield (1992), cooperation creates a supportive atmosphere in the classroom in which each individual student's positive self-image is reinforced by the peers, so that s/he may feel secure enough to express his/her individuality.

Although as Harmer (2001:347) stresses 'there is much to be learned from the various methodology books, journal and magazines produced for teachers of English', the collected data indicates that only one-third of all the teachers read source literature regularly. Taking into consideration that the offer of EFL publishers is so varied that plenty of suggestions and additional materials might be used to improve the lesson, it may be concluded that not many of the teachers have the chance to succeed in keeping their students highly engaged in the lesson, unless they make a more intensive effort to prepare lessons which would appeal to students' needs, and interests more. Foreign language teachers need to bear in mind that the level of their students' satisfaction with the lesson not only influences their motivation to learn, but also deepens students' trust and respect of the FL teacher, which contributes to effective classroom interaction.

The teachers need to be more aware that the factors which constitute the strongest motivation for teenagers to learn English are not only co-operation and competition but also the lesson's focus on 'here and now', i.e. on the use of the foreign language in classroom communication both on- and off-task. Especially off-task communication in the FL seems to influence students' motivation to learn. They treat it as genuine communication in which the FL really serves as the means not only to exchange information but also to interact on the personal level expressing thoughts and ideas. Thus, what the teachers may do to stimulate their students' motivation to learn most effectively is to construct FL lessons in such a way

that apart from spending most of the lesson time doing communicative activities focusing on students' co-operation and competition they may give their students more opportunities to express their views concerning different topics during off-task time and in this way lead not only to raising their motivation to learn but also to the development of their interpersonal skills. The teachers need to be aware that they are expected to play not only the role of knowledge-givers but, above all, mediators in the classroom who, according to Feuerstein's view (1980), are ready to assist students in building a good rapport with their peers and with the outside world as well.

The teachers also need to bear in mind that regular self-reflection upon the ways of motivating students to learn is necessary to ensure the appropriate selection of the most effective strategies to be incorporated into the lesson, in order to 'convince' students of the usefulness of learning English to reach personal and professional goals.

1.1.3 Student age and their stage of psychological development

The students participating in the research project were teenagers. This is the age group claimed by some teachers to be the easiest to teach and by others, e.g. by Puchta and Schratz (1993:1) the least motivated and the one which presents outright discipline problems. This duality of opinions is due to the fact that adolescence is a very specific period in life in which young people search for their identity, being no longer children but not yet adults. According to what Erikson (1963) claims, the period is characterised by feelings of confusion and aimlessness which, together with rebellion against any known authority, such as parents and teachers, may be the source of discipline problems. Thus, to reduce the feeling of aimlessness that many teenagers may experience, the teachers need to remember to present their students the purposes for learning and also the objectives of the lesson in a clear and encouraging way so as to provide them with a feeling of order and control. What is more, in order to ensure effective classroom interaction the teachers need to give their students more opportunities to make their own decisions and to express who they are more freely. This way the learners will be able to establish a strong sense of their personal identity.

The teachers also need to be more aware that sharing responsibility for classroom decisions with students not only leads to raising the students' self-esteem but also makes teachers worthy of the students' trust. This trust in the teacher is very important for effective classroom interaction as, according to what Maslow (1987) claims, 'deficiency needs', such as the need to trust and be trusted, have to be met before trying to meet other, for example

cognitive and aesthetic needs. This means that students need to feel secure in the classroom to be able to develop as FL learners.

In this difficult period of searching for identity, the students' assessment of themselves as people and language learners fluctuates, sometimes very rapidly. Thus, the teachers are expected to be careful 'observers' of their students' emotional and cognitive development, to be able to 'notice' when and why the students' self-assessment drops. This observation will help the teachers to encourage students to self-assess their language performance effectively by, for example, completing assessment grids based on enumerating the student's achievements in learning the FL at least once a semester, to make the learners aware not so much of weaknesses they need to work upon, but above all their strengths which are the key to high self-esteem.

1.1.4 Student affective needs

In recent years and with the development of more sophisticated computer-aided learning environments, the need for these environments to take into account student's affective states and traits and to place them within the context of the social activity of learning has become a very important issue. Thus, in order to ensure effective classroom discourse teachers always need to try to see the 'human' side of teaching, and treat teaching as the chance to meet with real and independent individuals who want to be understood, respected and liked first of all and then to be taught. Teachers' genuine interest in a student as an individual and not only a group member affects the student's self-esteem. Thus, as Rogers (1996) claims, in order to ensure effective FL teaching, teachers need to concentrate on enhancing their students' self-image. They may do so by learning who the students are as individuals and what needs and expectations they have as FL learners so as to be able to create for them a learning environment in which they would feel relaxed, positive and unthreatened (Harmer, 2001).

This focus on the affective side of teaching is undoubtedly a distinctive feature of 'good' teachers and it may also be perceived as the key to understanding the true nature of classroom interaction. Thus, the focus of teachers' interest in the classroom needs to be not only developing students' FL competence but also learning how to build a good rapport with students by helping them to feel secure in the classroom. According to what Harmer (2001) suggests, teachers may do this by keeping criticism to minimum, encouraging students to feel positive about themselves and letting them speak about their feelings and emotions. In this

way students are given a chance to reduce the stress and tension connected with school and learning. One example of such humanistic approach to teaching is presented by Moscowitz (1978) who, in her book *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Classroom,* gives examples of activities designed both to make students feel good and secure in the classroom and at the same time to practise English grammar. In this way, by using humanistic-style activities, the teachers may simultaneously develop their students' language competence and care about their affective needs.

Encouraging students to make use of their own lives and feelings in the classroom may, as Rinvolucri and Davies state, help students to 'absorb grammar, as it were, through peripheral vision' (1995:xii). This means that they may learn the foreign language by integrating learning with discovering their true-selves.

1.2 Teacher-related factors

1.2.1 Teacher beliefs about classroom roles

It may be concluded on the basis of the data collected that what the teachers believe to be one of their responsibilities as language teachers is playing the role of a needs analyst. They seem to be aware that successful recognition of their students' needs gives them a chance to meet those needs effectively, which will contribute both to effective classroom interaction and to the students' language progress. If the teacher understands the students' needs and tries to meet them, the learners respond with trust and confidence which, according to Williams and Burden (1997), make the best environment for learning. Playing different roles in the classroom, with the role of knowledge-giver being the most prominent, may only bring good teaching results when the knowledge that the teacher shares with his/her students is in response to their needs. In their choice of roles to be taken during an English class the teachers need to take into consideration not only syllabus and lesson planning criteria but also who the students are and what expectations and needs connected with the person of the teacher they have. For example, there are students who appreciate the fact that the teacher plays in the classroom the role of a team-member participating in different language activities. However, there are also students who only expect to see the teacher as a mentor and never a participant.

According to Wright (1987), an inappropriate selection of roles played by the teacher in the classroom resulting mainly from his/her lack of experience in teaching or unawareness of the expectations that students have towards the teacher, may lead to a poor rapport with

learners and ineffectiveness of the teacher's effort to encourage students to learn. The teachers therefore need to carefully consider not only the choice of classroom roles, but also the way that they are performed. For example, the role of assessor of students' work, played by teachers so frequently, does not necessarily have to contribute to effective discourse (interaction) if, instead of stimulating students to take the effort to learn the FL, teachers discourage them from attempting communication by being too critical.

What also needs to be taken into consideration by the teachers when they take decisions about the roles to be performed during a lesson is that the students see those who teach the foreign language foremost as 'facilitators' who are in the classroom to assist them in learning. The students do not want only to see in their teachers almighty and omnipotent knowledge-givers, but rather friendly guides who are willing to help in many different situations, not necessarily only those connected with learning.

One of the roles that English teachers should take more frequently in the classroom is that of the explorer who aims to discover which factors facilitate, and which make teaching difficult, in each particular language group. This individual approach taken by the teachers should concern not only groups of students but also each individual learner. The teachers need to feel more responsible for getting to know their learners, in order to be able to prepare lessons more relevant to their interests, needs and expectations so as to make learning meaningful.

One of the measures that may be taken is creating a portfolio for each language group. Gathering personal information about each individual student, for example in order to create a student profile, as well as collecting some of his/her works (e.g. tests, essays and journal samples) gives the teacher a chance to observe the particular student's emotional, psychological, cognitive and above all, language competence development over a certain period of time.

Another effective way of collecting useful information about learners is co-operation with a school psychologist, if such a person works at school. Information gathered in this way may give the teachers some insights into the private life and problems of particular students and facilitate understanding of their behaviour in the classroom. This will also give the teachers an opportunity to deserve their students' trust and respect by helping them to overcome the problems that they experience whilst playing the role of understanding and empathising teacher-helpers. The teachers may also prepare, distribute and collect questionnaires and class surveys prepared for students and to carry out action research projects in the classroom. Such mini-scale projects are a direct way of collecting information

concerning both students' likes, dislikes, hobbies and also their views on different questions posed by the teacher and concerning the teaching-learning process. Drawing conclusions on the basis of the responses collected will give the teachers a chance to learn more about their learners and, in consequence, to improve teaching them.

What also seems to need more of the teachers' attention in ensuring successful classroom interaction is the identification of each language group's dynamics and the roles that each particular student plays in the group by regular observation of the students' behaviour during lessons. It seems especially important to find and take care of those students who, for different reasons, are excluded from the group, e.g. the alienated and phantom students. The teachers need to understand that this is their task to develop their students' potential as language learners and individuals. Stefanović (1976) stresses that students are perfect observers who easily notice how these 'cast away' learners are treated by the teacher. Thus, neglecting those students in the classroom may lead to their being excluded from the peer group forever and may negatively influence their self-assessment leading to even more passivity and withdrawal.

1.2.2 The teacher personality

One of the factors which undoubtedly significantly influence classroom discourse is the teacher's personality. Whether the teacher is an extrovert or introvert, whether shy or outgoing, etc., will cast light on his/her rapport with the students.

The data demonstrates that the teachers participating in the project are generally open people of an optimistic disposition who find a lot of satisfaction in teaching. The outgoing personality that many of them represent appears to be conducive to building a good rapport with students, as it facilitates establishing personal contact with them very quickly. However, what may constitute a threat to successful classroom communication is the tendency observed in the case of some extrovert teachers to play the role of a star focusing their attention not so much on meeting their students' needs but rather their own need to be admired by students. Yet, generally the teachers participating in the project seem to be ready to go beyond their own needs being driven by genuine interest in getting to know the learners. Not only openness to other people but also such personality feature as enthusiasm appears to contribute to effective classroom interaction. Taking into consideration the fact that personality is not susceptible to sudden changes, it seems to be important already for the secondary school graduates to be aware of their future profession requirements before making the choice of

studies. This awareness may help them realise whether their personality will contribute to ensuring successful classroom communication or not.

What also needs to be taken into consideration are the students' expectations concerning their teacher's personality. Students' responses indicate that the features that the teenagers most appreciate in their teachers are being fair in assessing their work and being patient and empathic when it comes to dealing with different problems that the students experience in and outside school. The diary data also indicates that such features as being just or unfair, well or poorly organised, active or withdrawn, greatly influence students' perception of their teacher as authority for them or not. Although students may like their, for example scatty teacher, rarely will such a person be treated as an authority, i.e. a person who sets a good example. What the students seem to expect from a teacher-authority is to be a person who is professionally competent with the language knowledge and skills to manage the teaching-learning process effectively. This, in the students' view, means being a person of not only moral but also very high professional standards.

As the research data shows, the teachers need to devote more attention to self-reflection upon the influence that their personality has on the classroom interaction. The data indicates that some teachers' self-image does not always comply with the image that their students have about them. The discrepancies that appear in the students' and teachers' own perception of their personalities may hinder classroom communication and be the source of misunderstanding and even develop into a conflict between the teachers and the learners. It may be easily avoided if only the teachers attempt to find out how their students perceive them both as teachers and individuals. Equipped with this knowledge the teachers may not so much change their true selves to meet their students expectations but rather reinforce and develop those aspects of their personality which contribute to building a good rapport with the students.

1.2.3 Teacher individual style of teaching

Teaching style, although unique to each language teacher, usually has features which make it possible to be given a more general label, e.g. an authoritarian or democratic style. Each style, however, at least in theory, can be presented as a dichotomy, with students' autonomy on one end and total control of the teacher's on the other. The teacher's style is therefore a factor which indicates the degree of teacher's control over the group of students and the level of learner autonomy that is allowed and exercised. Widdowson (1990: 188) claims that it is only

the teacher and his/her style who sets limits to students' autonomy. This means that depending on how the teacher defines his/her teaching style, whether it is learner- or teacher-centred, influences the level of independence s/he gives to students in making classroom decisions. The data indicates that the students appreciate it highly when their teacher shares responsibility for the classroom decisions with them but they also stress that only a few teachers represent in their view a democratic style of teaching, i.e. give students control over the shape of the language course within the framework set by the teachers themselves or the institution. What the students expect from their teachers is that they will be more open to the students' ideas and suggestions. For the teachers this means giving up the traditional role of omnipotent knowledge-givers and focusing their attention on creating a learner-centred classroom.

It needs to be stressed, however, that in teachers' attempt to meet their students' needs they may find it necessary, as Hadfield (1992) notices, to use language activities that are not typical of their teaching style. In such cases she encourages those teachers not to give up their approach but to be open and willing to experiment with different strategies, activities and methods of teaching to develop themselves as professionals and to let their students develop their potential, too. Tudor (1993) indicates that to be able to create a classroom with the student and not the teacher in the centre of attention, teachers need to develop such features as maturity, intuition and educational skills to be able to develop their students' awareness of language and learning, which are in a marked contrast to traditional teacher's behaviour. On the other hand, in the teachers' attempt to meet their students' expectations they need to remember that learner-centredness, resulting from the development of democratic style of teaching, needs to be introduced gradually as students must be taught how to benefit from the 'freedom' a teacher gives them to make classroom decisions themselves. O'Neill (1991) expresses his critical view on too rapid implementation of learner-centredness claiming that teachers' abdication of the knowledge-giving role may amount to a form of neglect and students may feel insecure and uncomfortable with their 'new' role of language managers. This shows that only gradual and well-planned introduction of democratic style of teaching will lead to effective classroom discourse as only those students who are accustomed to autonomy in the classroom are able to appreciate the teacher's withdrawal from full control of the teaching-learning process.

The development of teaching style seems to be affected by the teacher's belief about who their students perceive 'teacher-authority' to be, as different understanding of the 'authority' that teachers have, makes them take different approaches to the development of

their own teaching style. The teachers participating in the project generally hold the opinion that to be perceived as an authority by students, a teacher always has to set a good example of professional competence and high moral standards to win their students respect. Thus, developing their own style of teaching they tend to take upon themselves the role of 'wise leaders', as one teacher called it. However, they need to be made aware that leadership may involve overusing authority, in the sense of power exercised on students. This as Gordon (1998) claims may result in negative feelings in the learners such as anger, frustration and even hatred experienced in the classroom. When building their authority the teachers also need to remember to choose such strategies which will make their students perceive the teachers as professionally competent and empathic towards the learners. For example, the teacher may show interest for each student's life by offering help in difficulties experienced by the students and expressing understanding for their failures.

The results of the research indicate that although one-third of the teachers claim that they represent a democratic style of teaching, in reality and in their students' views, there are very few teachers who are really open to accept the sudents' decisions concerning the teaching-learning process and prepared to share with them responsibility for the shape of the language course conducted. To be able to meet their students' expectations better, the teachers may focus more on the observation of how their personal teaching style develops to be able to introduce all the necessary changes to it and to make more informed choices concerning the teaching-learning process in general. The improvements implemented will make the teachers more open to co-operation with the students in creating effective classroom discourse together.

1.2.4 Teacher professional self-assessment

There are many areas of teachers' work which may and should be reflected upon by the teachers. Those areas which the teachers participating in the project were asked to focus on in the questionnaire responses and when participating in interviews included the teachers':

- motivation to work
- attitude to teaching
- beliefs about teaching
- professional development
- building a rapport with students
- managing the teaching-learning process

- personality
- body language and other aspects of non-verbal communication with the students

The responses gathered indicate that what the teachers think about themselves as professionals has a great influence on the quality of classroom discourse. The key to professional self-assessment is conscious and systematic self-reflection. However, according to what the teachers state in the interviews, they very rarely think about the way they teach or behave in the classroom. If following Ruddock's view (1984), the frequency of each individual teacher's self-reflection upon his/her way of teaching indicates the level of the teacher's responsibility for his/her work, then the teachers participating in the project may be perceived as not feeling fully responsible for their classroom behaviour. What, however, may be concluded about the teachers on the basis of the self-reflections triggered by participation in the project is that those teachers who perceive themselves to be 'born' to teach and who are convinced that their personality is ideal for teaching, seem to find it easier to build a good rapport with their students as they appear to be less stressed and more spontaneous when conducting lessons. Such an attitude appears to be advantageous for the classroom interaction; students seem to like and respect these teachers for being natural both in their classroom behaviour and in their appreciation of teaching.

Not only teachers' personality and attitude to teaching affect their professional self-assessment. What teachers think of themselves as professionals seems to depend on what they do to develop as FL teachers. However, the research data shows that the teachers participating in the project seem to be unaware of how important their professional development is not only for their self-assessment but also for the quality of teaching and the rapport that they have with students. The opinion that more than two-thirds of the teachers hold is that they develop just to meet the requirements of the institution they work for. What seems to be alarming in the teachers' attitude to professional development is the observation that they seem to be totally unaware of the need to develop their language competence. They seem not to notice the fact that working with students whose language level is usually quite low, leads in time to foreign language attrition and, in consequence, to their professional incompetence. The conclusion that may be formulated on the basis of the data is that awareness of responsibility for teachers' own development as professionals needs to be raised already at the pre-service stage of teacher training.

Being reflective-practitioners will make the teachers more aware of what verbal and non-verbal messages they send to their learners. At the same time, it will make them more

careful observers and interpreters of the signals sent by the learners, which will certainly lead to better teacher-learner interaction and better organisation of the teaching-learning process. For example, self-reflection upon the use of body language in the classroom made me realise that outward gestures, directed to learners, together with a smile, are powerful tools, which facilitate reducing the mental barrier between my students and me, and in consequence, they contribute to successful classroom interaction. The teachers need to be more aware that non-verbal aspects of classroom discourse such as the tone of voice, gestures, facial expression and proxemics have great influence on their students' well-being in the classroom and on their general attitude to learning the foreign language. The non-verbal channel is a better and more direct transmitter of the emotions experienced by the teacher, which helps students discover their teacher's true feelings towards them and attitude to his/her profession.

The teachers' self-assessment as professionals, which is shaped by each teacher's feeling of self-worth, greatly influences the level of the teachers' stress connected with teaching. Consequently, the level of stress affects the quality of the teacher-learner interaction in the foreign language classroom and if it is high, it also makes teachers burn out professionally. Thus, to be able to build the best possible rapport with students and to avoid the 'burn out' syndrome, the teachers need to first identify the sources of stress connected with their work at school and then look for ways of eliminating or at least reducing it. What they need to be aware of, however, is that apart from external sources of professional stress, for example misbehaving students or conflicts with a headmaster, there is also an internal one which is the sense of low self-esteem that some of the teachers might have. Thus, in order to eliminate the stress factors threatening both teachers' professional development and also classroom interaction the teachers need to self-reflect upon their self-assessment as people and professionals. They need to do it regularly in order to be able to appreciate their strengths, which are for them the source of high self-assessment and also to 'notice' their weaknesses - in order to take effective measures aimed at eliminating them.

Students' regular evaluation of the foreign language course and the teacher's classroom performance may prove beneficial for the classroom discourse as well. Reflecting upon students' views on the teachers' work will give the teachers the opportunity to introduce necessary changes in their classroom behaviour gradually, according to the needs of their students. This will make the students believe that teaching does not mean imposing the teacher's will on them, but rather helping them to realise their potential in an attempt to learn the foreign language. Such co-operation between teachers and learners in improving teaching-learning process and building a good rapport will surely contribute to the teachers being more

frequently perceived as an authority by their students. It is also likely to positively influence the development of students' autonomy by giving them opportunities to express views on their teachers' work. The only condition that needs to be met, however, is that teachers' self-reflection upon teaching and students' assessment of their English teacher's work must become a routine procedure in the FL classroom.

2. Sociolinguistic factors

2.1 Student-related factors

2.1.1 Student family background and the place of education in the student's system of values

Although not very much commented upon in this work, students' family background also influences the classroom discourse. Konarzewski (1995) claims that the place of the student's family in the structure of society, its socio-economic status and the system of values represented by the members of the family, especially by parents, have a powerful influence on the teenager's way of perceiving school education. He explains that children of well-educated parents tend to rate school learning high and their attitude to school is generally more positive than that of their peers coming from poorly educated families. His views find their confirmation in the responses provided by the students. As the data indicates, motivation of these students who attend mainly comprehensive schools, is frequently focused on reaching both short and long-distance aims, with the Matura exam being the first of these aims. Those students seem to be more aware of the need to learn a foreign language and are more willing to work systematically and even to take extra courses, or private tutorials to learn the FL well. This is also directly connected with the socio-economic status of the families that they live in and thus with their parents' greater awareness of the fact that their children's professional success in the future depends, to some extent, on their FL mastery. Comprehensive school students more frequently than their peers from profiled secondary schools tend to perceive their English teacher as an authority who is aware of the potential for learning the language that they possess.

The data seems to confirm that the attitude to education that each family has is a factor which determines the level of individual students' motivation to learn. If the family members view learning as having great value, as it is often in the case of the compregensive school students, the student's motivation increases. High motivation stimulates regular learning and

so the students generally experience fewer learning difficulties than their peers whose belief in the effectiveness of school learning and therefore also motivation to work is low. Profiled secondary school students frequently live in families which do not pay so much attention to gaining formal education. Many parents seem to be unaware of the need to develop their children's potential by 'pushing' them into learning and supervising their language progress regularly as many parents of the comprehensive school students do.

Socio-economic status of the family also influences students' attitude and motivation to learn the FL in that the students coming from families of low social status have limited access to sources, e.g. computer and the Internet use, but mainly to financial sources. The collected data shows that the grouop of students attending extra language courses and private tutorials recruits mainly from the students attending comprehensive schools as their parents frequenly find financing extra learning for their children more affordable than the parents of profiled secondary school students. As Lee and Burkam (2002) claim, such students have therefore worse educational chances than their peers from better-off families which often finds its reflection in these students' cognitive skills level and thus their learning achievements. Poor results frequently obtained by those students lower their motivation to learn the foreign language.

2.1.2 Language group dynamics

One of the major factors shaping classroom interaction is the internal structure of the language group. Who each student is, what 'learning history' s/he has, what his/her attitudes to and beliefs about the teacher and the FL are and what level of language competence s/he has, all influence the rapport a teacher has with each student and the whole group in general. The data shows that the teachers need to be more aware of the group dynamics, both in the sense of who the students are, i.e. what the level of their students' competence is, what their family background is, but also what roles are played by individual students within the structure of the group. More regular class observations and more advanced sociometric measures need to be applied by the teachers to learn 'who is who', as this knowledge constitutes the key to meeting their students' cognitive and affective needs. The teachers' awareness of group dynamics will also help them to limit discipline problems more successfully as knowing who the misbehaving students are makes it possible to choose and apply strategies aimed at preventing such problems. Moreover, the teachers' knowledge of internal group structure will contribute to more effective identification of the roles, such as a

star or a follower, played by the students within the group. This, in turn, will facilitate understanding of students' behaviour in the classroom and help the teachers take appropriate measures aimed at developing their students' potential as language learners and individuals.

Whatever the profile of the group, the teachers also need to pay attention to the fact that as Hadfield (1992) observes, dynamics shifts in time under the influence of changes in roles and relationships within the group. This means that the teachers need to be constantly responsive to and up-to-date with those changes to be able to ensure effective classroom communication.

2.2 Teacher-related factors

2.2.1 Teacher verbal and non-verbal language use for different classroom purposes

2.2.1.1 Expressing approval and disapproval

The views expressed by the students in their questionnaires indicate that they expect their teachers to appreciate more the effort they put into participating actively in the lesson, because this makes their motivation rise. What is more, the students claim to be most motivated to work if they only have a chance to profit from it, for example to get a good mark, or be praised by the teacher so that they can build their authority in the group. Although establishing a direct contact with the students by, for example patting their shoulders, may contribute to the students' well-being during the lesson,

this form of teacher's approval does not give students any, as one student called it, 'durable benefits' and therefore is not highly appreciated by them. Generally, the teachers need to remember to express their approval of the students' effort not only more frequently than their disapproval but also to do it in a way that the students find 'attractive' and worth effort as this is what motivates them to work the most. The teachers need to be aware that more than half of the students in the project do not attend any private language course, or one-to-one tutorials outside school. Thus, the classroom may be the only place for them to hear some approval and encouragement to go on improving their language competence.

When expressing disapproval, the teachers need to be more aware of the fact that, in the students' opinion, punishing them with a bad mark for, for example not doing their homework is highly ineffective, although the teachers seem to be convinced that it is. What therefore needs to be done is to find better ways to encourage students to do their homework regularly. The students' opinions suggest that failing a test is perceived by many of them to be 'a small personal disaster'which is disheartening, especially if they had prepared for the test, although

their efforts for different reasons proved to be insufficient. What the students seem to expect from their teachers is that they will try to 'get to know why the student failed a test'. It shows that the students generally feel the need to explain the reason for their failure, so that the teacher could understand them, as even when they fail, they want to be perceived by their teachers as individuals who deserve attention and support in coping with the learning problems that they encounter.

The teachers need to remember that they are expected to be empathic as meeting their students' affective needs plays a very important role in ensuring optimal learning conditions. Nor can it be forgotten that teachers' disapproval leads to students' resistance to learning while approval, expressed both verbally and non-verbally, plays a powerful ego-enhancing**,** motivating and therapeutic role in shaping a rapport with students by giving them a sense of achievement which significantly contributes to raising their self-assessment.

2.2.1.2 Assessing student work

As for the teachers' assessment of their students' work, it appears that most teenagers participating in the project are convinced that it is the knowledge they possess that should be and is the most important factor influencing the assessment. The students' views also indicate that what they claim to be the most important factor shaping their perception of their English teacher as being objective or not, is the clarity of criteria of evaluation of students' work and their fair application to each student. The profiled secondary school teachers who usually work with poor achievers or these students who are generally not interested in learning at all need to pay special attention to presenting to their students the criteria of their language performance evaluation in a clear way. If they fail to do it in a way that the students will find easy to follow, they may be perceived as unjust assessors, especially when they let some student 'manipulate the conversation' with the teacher to avoid giving him/her another poor grade. It is therefore important that the teachers always justify the choice of the mark they give to their students by referring to those criteria as the teacher's ability to justify why a student obtained a particular grade is a proof for the students that they are all treated equally.

As mentioned earlier, descriptive assessment, i.e. teacher's comment upon the student's performance, may contribute to more successful classroom interaction. The aim of such an additional comment is, for the students, to get a justification of the grade obtained and to bridge the gap between the students and the teacher-assessor, in other words, to make assessment 'humanistic' by assuring students that the teacher cares about them as individuals.

What each student needs is positive feedback from his/her language teacher. Even in the case of obtaining a bad mark, the students expect their teacher to comment upon the poor grade given, and for example, to indicate what still needs improvement.

When commenting upon their students' language performance, the teachers need to remember that it is very important for the students to be given a chance to 'excuse' themselves, i.e. to explain why they were not prepared for the test or the lesson. Most students feel the need to be 'fair' with their teachers and they expect teacher's understanding claiming that both their private and school life in the period of adolescence is 'hard'. This means, for example, that the teachers are expected by the students to listen to their explanations if they fail a test and to refrain from expressing malicious comments in front of other learners. The teachers need to be more aware that, according to what the students believe in, they have no right to humiliate the students for their poor performance.

2.2.1.3 Keeping discipline

When it comes to keeping discipline in the classroom the teachers need to be more aware that the methods they choose to deal with disruptive behaviour may not always be approved of by the students. This may lead to a poor rapport with them as they may lose respect for the teacher and stop trusting him/her. This means that identification of the source of the students' misbehaviour plays an important role in shaping classroom discourse. Although many cases of students' disruptive behaviour are connected with their emotional development, which is so intensive in the period of adolescence, Harmer (2001) stresses that the sources of discipline problems may in fact be very different, e.g. a difficult home situation, low self-assessment, or simply boredom. Teachers' awareness of the reasons for students' misbehaviour is very important for ensuring effective classroom discourse as it helps teachers to understand the badly behaving students and to apply an appropriate strategy to prevent possible conflict situations in the classroom.

One of the solutions that may be applied in order to eliminate problems with discipline in English classes is to build a rapport with students in such a way that they will be given a chance to 'see' a real authority in their teacher. In this way the teachers will not have to raise their voice or shape the classroom interaction by using such an inappropriate strategy as shouting. If students can see that their teacher is a professionally competent person who, apart from setting clear rules for classroom interaction is also consistent in both punishing the

students for breaking the rules and rewarding them for good 'events', no discipline problems should be experienced in his/her classroom.

When it comes to finding the best solution to classroom discipline problems, the data indicates that the most effective method that can be used is the creation of clear and easy to understand 'Code of Conduct' - a set of rules regulating classroom life. It should include a list of 'offences' to the classroom etiquette together with a type of punishment that the student (and the teacher as well) is exposed to in the case when s/he breaks any of the rules. What is more, the code must be adjusted to the needs of the given group of students. However, as Harmer (2001) stresses, English teachers need to be aware that if the application of the code is to be successful, consistency in punishing students for breaking the established rules is a necessity. This strategy may appear to be especially effective in the case of profiled secondary school students who are usually, according to what the teachers who work in this type of schools state, hard to discipline.

The teachers need to be more aware that 'face-to-face' conversations with individual students have great influence on the level of those students' motivation to learn. Such conversations also play an important role in shaping and strengthening a teacher-learner rapport in and outside the classroom. The opportunity given to students to talk with their teacher frankly and openly about the issues which are often disclosed only to best friends, supported by the teacher's real interest in the student's life, leads to building the atmosphere of trust in which students seem to develop the fastest.

2.2.1.4 Teacher body language in the classroom

The sociolinguistic aspects of the FL classroom discourse are not only connected with the verbal channel of exchanging information between the teacher and the learners, but the classroom interaction is also very much influenced by the non-verbal communication channel. The teacher's body language in the classroom including gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, physical proximity and physical appearance, play a very important role in shaping the interaction and type of rapport as well.

The data presented and analysed in Chapter III shows, however, that the teachers are not aware of their body language. What they therefore may find helpful in learning what non-verbal messages they send to their students are video-recordings of their lessons. What may also be useful is inviting to the classroom an external observer, for example a colleague who will be more willing to support the teacher than to evaluate him/her. Finally, one of the best

and the most direct methods of 'discovering' how the teacher's body language influences students' level of concentration in the lesson and their motivation to learn is talking to students about this particular aspect of the teacher's classroom conduct.

Teachers' awareness of what aspects of their behaviour influence their students most appears to be extremely important for ensuring effective classroom discourse taking into consideration that 67% of the learners claim their interest in the lesson depends to a great extent on how their teacher behaves while conducting the language classes. This shows that the teachers cannot ignore the influence of this powerful communication tool on the classroom discourse.

The way the teacher looks when coming to the classroom, together with other non-verbal signals sent to students influence their attitude to the teacher and as Brown (1987) notices, lead either to lifting barriers between him/her and them or making students more open to their teacher. He explains that the teacher's style of dress, but also his/her hairstyle, jewellery worn and even the kind of perfume s/he uses, although frequently only subconsciously registered, constitute for the students very important sources of information about who the teacher is and what values s/he considers to be important in his/her life.

The teachers need to be aware that not only their physical appearance but also changes of their physical position in the classroom greatly influence many students' motivation, interest in the lesson and even the level of anxiety. For example, although walking around the classroom facilitates supervising students' work and prevents disruptive behaviour, it is perceived by many students to be a source of stress resulting from the teacher's proximity. It is therefore important for the teachers to observe their students' non-verbal reactions to the teachers' classroom position more carefully in order to be able to 'adjust' their own body language to their students' needs and expectations.

The teachers are also advised to control more not only their body language but also their emotions in order not to bring those negative ones into the classroom. The students expect their teachers to be emotionally balanced as well as open and friendly towards them. It is the students' belief that they come to the classroom to learn and not to be 'exposed' to the consequences of their teacher's negative mood. Keeping a diary may constitute a perfect tool for monitoring emotions that the teacher brings into the classroom. The teachers need to be aware that verbalisation of these emotions eliminates the risk of losing control over them, which may take place in the case of, for example, classroom incidents resulting from students' misbehaviour.

The students' opinions concerning their teachers' behaviour in the case of critical incidents taking place in the classroom indicate that it would be beneficial for the classroom interaction if the teachers learned to avoid such situations. Negative emotions, such as annoyance, anger or even fury, that teachers experience at those moments influence their own behaviour very strongly and may trigger actions that students will not accept and which, in consequence, will make the learners lose respect for and trust in the teacher. Reading source literature and exchanging experiences and observations with colleagues may help the teachers work out strategies that could be used in the case when some critical incidents, such as student's refusal to accept the teacher's punishment, fighting and swearing in the classroom and even being insulted by the student, happen.

In order to interact with their students effectively, the teachers as key figures in the teaching-learning process who organise and manage it, need to remember that they constantly use not only verbal, but also non-verbal means of communication to interact with the students. This non-verbal aspect of classroom communication cannot be undervalued, as although being frequently used subconsciously, as is the case of gestures and facial expressions, it affects classroom discourse and shapes students' attitude towards the teacher and consequently to the foreign language course itself, to a large extent.

2.2.2 Teacher family background and learning history

As it is in the case of students, teachers' family background has also influence on the way they behave in the classroom and shape relationships with students. The region that a teacher comes from - whether it is a city, a town or a village, the socio-economic status of the family and even the profession of parents, as claimed by Konarzewski (1995), all affect a future-teacher's personality, system of values in life and also perception of education within this system as they gradually and systematically shape the teachers' attitudes to teaching, learners and him/herself. Similarly, the teacher's learning history shapes his/her attitude to school as an institution, to learning and, of course, to teaching as well. The way the teacher was taught as a student is believed to be reflected in his/her teaching style. Thus, in order to establish good relations with students, the teachers need to first self-reflect upon their beliefs about learners, themselves, their profession, the language they teach and about learning as a process and then to look for the source of these beliefs both in their background and in their learning history in order to understand their own classroom behaviour better.

As the collected data shows, most teachers do not reflect upon their teaching unless some problems appear in the classroom. This may lead to the conclusion that most of them are unaware of the fact that who they are as teachers results from the way that they were brought up at home and also taught at school. The fact that the teachers were not able to state whether they were an authority for their students or not is the best proof of this. They had difficulties in answering the question as their perception of an 'authority', which was shaped at home and/or at school, was so idealised that they would not dare to describe themselves in this way. This indicates that only regular self-reflection upon both their beliefs and their family background may help the teachers to understand who they are as professionals and individuals and why they act the way they do.

3. Final comments and implications

The research data highlightened in this part of work indicates that when trying to explore the reality of their own classrooms, teachers cannot simply reflect upon the methods and strategies that they use to teach the foreign language. It seems that their prime responsibility as FL teachers should be the quality of relationship that they have with their students which, according to Appel (1995) constitutes the foundation for teaching of any subject and especially for teaching a foreign language which in reality means teaching communication with other people. If teacher-learner relations are unhealthy, teaching becomes ineffective, as the classroom is perceived by students to be a hostile place that is not conducive to learning.

The analysis of the data presented show that there are many similarities in the way that both the teachers and the students perceive different aspects of classroom communication but that there are also many discrepancies resulting from the teacher's unawareness of how different psycho- and sociolinguistic factors influence FL classroom discourse and also of what their students' views on the teachers' classroom behaviours are.

The observation that can be made on the basis of the analysis of the project is that more emphasis needs also to be put on the contribution of classroom research to the teachers' development and their self-awareness as professionals. English teachers, among the other roles that they take in and outside the classroom, become, when participating in or conducting their own research projects, researchers attempting to make their beliefs about learners, teaching and themselves explicit. Also, they become reflective practitioners, more aware of how their way of thinking and therefore their teaching as well affect the rapport they have with their students. Thus, it appears that teacher-training programmes need to be more

focused on encouraging teachers to carry out their own research projects for the benefit of foreign language teaching and classroom discourse. Gabrys-Barker (2006) indicates that carrying out action research projects contributes to development of student-teachers in two different dimensions. Within each dimension she enumerates the possible objectives that may be reached when carrying out action research at pre-service stage of teaching:

Didactic dimension:

1. to make the pre-service teachers (student teachers) aware of their classroom (and outside classroom) teaching problems and to enable them to specify the area of difficulty and pinpoint the variables involved;
2. make the students look for available resources in terms of literature on the subject to give them firm theoretical background
3. make the students share problems in discussions and collaborate with their peers in finding solutions to be tried out in their own classroom

Personal (affective) dimension:

a. to develop student-teachers enthusiasm for teaching as a challenging experience to prevent routine;
b. to create appropriate attitudes towards their role in a classroom (feelings of both responsibility and independence/autonomy);
c. to create appropriate attitudes towards the roles learners play in a classroom;
d. to open teachers to negotiations with their learners;
e. to feel a bond with other novice-teachers;
f. to develop a special rapport with the learners.

(Gabrys-Barker, 2006)

Action research may be therefore seen not only as 'pragmatically-rooted research "at the chalk face" (Maley, 1991) designed to find answers to small-scale classroom problems but also as a prime tool for teachers' development helping teachers to develop skills and confidence to investigate their work in the classroom.

What is more, the level of teachers' awareness of the psycho- and sociolinguistic factors influencing classroom interaction and the procedures governing interpersonal communication in general and in the classroom context needs to be raised by introducing necessary changes and improvements in the system of education of pre-service teachers. This may relate to 'sensitizing' trainees to the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic basis of human communication, which will be focused upon more in the programme of studies. Also, it may prove effective in training pre-service teachers to give them the chance to use theoretical

knowledge in practice by giving them opportunities to participate in different forms of interpersonal skills training. All this will undoubtedly lead to the professional development of teachers, making them more mature professionals able to build a good rapport with their learners.

Appendix 1 Questionnaire for a teacher

Name and surname:

Age:

Qualifications:

Which university/college/ other school did you graduate from and when:

Experience:

- Where do you work now?
- How long have you been working as a foreign language teacher?

Part 1

1. Do you think that you have developed professionally since your graduation?

   Yes/No/I do not know

   Comment:.....

2. What forms of development do you use to work more effectively? Determine the frequency of their use on the scale of 1-5 where 1- never, 5- very often

Forms of development	**1-5**
Participation in conferences and workshops	
Reading resource literature	
Talking with other teachers	
Observing lessons of other teachers	
Self-reflecting upon own lessons	
Asking students to assess the lesson	
Preparing questionnaires for students with questions concerning the assessment of lessons	
Carrying out classroom action research	

3. Determine on the scale of 1-3 to what degree you perceive teaching to be stressful for you, if at all (1-it is not stressful, 3- it is very stressful). Underline the option which best reflects your opinion

   1 - 2 - 3

4. Determine on the scale of 1-5 which of the following situations do you consider to be the most stressful for you as a teacher (1- not stressful at all, 5- very stressful)

Potential stress factors	**1-5**
'Difficult' students	
Keeping discipline in the classroom	

Bringing work home	
Time pressure: a lot of language material to cover and not much time to do it	
Unlimited working time	
Emotional treatment of students' failures and successes	
Exposure to continuous evaluation on the part of students, parents, etc.	
Inability to influence principal's management decisions	
The need to take measures aimed at being perceived an authority by students	
Constant demands from: -students, -parents, - principal	
Common expectation to be always up to date with new programmes	
Constant need to develop professionally	
Other	

5. What are your strengths in teaching English: .....
6. What are your weaknesses in teaching English: .....
7. How do you assess the results of your work in comparison with the effort you put in teaching? (underline the appropriate one)

   Very well / well / not very well/ poor

   Comment.....
8. Does your engagement in teaching change over time? (underline the appropriate answer)

   increases / does not change / decreases

   Comment.....

Part 2

1. Which of the following features of personality describe you best (you can add your own features to the list)? Determine on the scale of 1 to 5 to what degree, in your opinion, the feature is characteristic of you as a person:

   1- the feature is not characteristic of me, 5- the feature is very characteristic of me

Feature	1-5
1. Dynamic	
2. Patient	
3. Cheerful	

4. Just	
5. Consistent	
6. Enthusiastic	
7. Understanding	
8. Demanding	
9. Other features.....	

2. How do you feel about your job? Do you like it or not? Yes/No/I am not sure
   Comment:.....
3. Do you think you are 'cut out' to do the profession' Yes/No/I am not sure
   Why?/ Why not?.....
4. Enumerate three features of character which make your job difficult (if there are any!)
   ……
5. How do you understand a statement: *'The teacher – Mr/Ms X is an authority for students'*
   Comment:.....
6. Do you think that you are an authority for your students?
   Yes / No / I do not know
   Comment…….
   If yes, what strategies do/did you use to build your authority?
   -
   -
   -
   -
7. Do you happen to treat students partially?
   Yes/ No /I am not sure
   Comment:……..
8. Do you think that students experience stress during your lessons?
   Yes/ No /I am not sure
   Comment……..…..
   In what teaching situations is the level of stress in your classroom the highest and the lowest? What are the students' reactions to stress? Fill in the table

Level of stress	**In what classroom situations**	**Students' reactions**
High level		
Low level		

9. Determine, to what degree each of the enlisted styles is characteristic of you as an English teacher in different teaching situations. Number each style from 1-5, where: 1-it is definitely not my style of teaching, 5- it is exactly my style

Styles	1-5	Comment
Authoritarian (teacher-ruler manages the lesson and makes all classroom decisions by him/ herself)		
Paternal (teacher treats students like his/her own children – with care and affection)		
Consultative (teacher consults with students different questions concerning classroom conduct but makes all decisions by him/ herself)		
Democratic (teacher gives students freedom to make classroom decisions within framework set by him/her and accepts their choices)		
Laissez-faire (teacher gives students total freedom to do whatever they want in the classroom)		

10. Which of the following roles do you play in the classroom and how frequently? Determine the frequency of their use on the scale of 1-5, where 1- never, 5- very often

Role	1-5	Comment
Knowledge giver		
Helper		
Motivator		
Manager		
Controller		
Assessor		
Attentive listener		
Negotiator		
Needs analyst		
Other…..		

11. What strategies do you use most frequently to: 1. motivate students to work, 2. express appreciation for their effort? Enumerate them starting from those you use most frequently and write in what situations you use each of them

Ways of motivating students to learn	In what situation
- - - -	
Ways of expressing appreciation for students' efforts	**In what situation**
- - -	

12. How do you express your discontent in the following situations:

A student:	Your reaction	How often (1-5)
is not prepared for the lesson		
has no homework		
failed a test		

13. Which of the following strategies do you use to keep discipline in the classroom and in what situations? Determine the frequency of their use on the scale of 1-5, where 1- never, 5- very often. You may add more strategies to the list

Strategy	Frequency	In what situation
You shout		
You give the class a 'penalty test'		
You send a student to the principal		
You ask for students' attention		
You interrupt the lesson You ask for students' attention		
You check students' knowledge orally		
You talk with a student after the class		
You write a note in the class register		
Other.....		

14. To what degree do the following factors influence the mark you give to your students? Determine it on the scale of 1-5 where: 1-it is not important, 5-it is a very important factor

Factors influencing the mark	1-5
What the student knows	
The ability to direct your attention to the part of the language material a student knows more about	
Teacher's attitude to the student	
Former grades the student obtained in English	
Student's appearance	
Other	

15. Do you think you always assess students' work objectively?

Yes / No / Not sure

Comment:.....

16. Assess your skills on the scale of 1-5 where: 5- very well, 1- very poorly

You can…	1-5	Comment
Speak English fluently		
Explain grammar clearly		
Speak interestingly about the culture of English speaking countries		

17. Are you a 'gesture' person? Determine it on the scale of 1-5, where: 1- You use almost no gestures, 2- You use a lot of gestures 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

18. What characteristic gestures and facial expressions do you use during a lesson? Determine how often you use them and what their purpose is.

	What gesture/ facial expression	How often (1-5)	In what situation	Purpose
Gestures				
Facial expressions				

19. How often during a lesson do you change your position in the classroom? Fill in the table

During a lesson....	Frequency (1-5)	Stage of the lesson	Why?
You sit at the desk			
You stand at the blackboard			
You walk around the classroom			
Other.....			

20. Do you think that keeping an eye contact when talking to a student is important?

Yes/No/I have no opinion

If yes, what is in your opinion the role of such contact?.....

How often do you try to keep eye contact with a student(s)/ a group? (underline the correct one)

Always / often/ sometimes/ rarely / never

21. Do you happen to bring into the classroom your:
    1. positive moods Yes / No / I am not sure
    2. negative moods? Yes / No / I am not sure

Comment:……

Determine on the scale of 1-5 how often you bring your moods into the classroom, where: 1-never, 5-very often. How does your mood influence the atmosphere of the lesson?

Teacher's mood	**How often (1-5)**	**Influence on the atmosphere of the lesson**
Positive		
Negative		

22. Do you think that appearance of a teacher influences the rapport s/he has with students?

Yes / No / I am not sure

Comment…….

23. Has it ever happen that the behaviour of some class you teach or a student made you extremely angry?

Yes /No

If yes, describe the situation and your verbal and non-verbal reaction to it

.....

.....

Kwestionariusz dla nauczyciela
(wersja oryginalna)

Imię i nazwisko:

Wiek:

Kwalifikacje do wykonywania zawodu: Jaką uczelnię ukończył(a) Pan(i) i kiedy?

Doświadczenie zawodowe: Gdzie Pan(i) obecnie pracuje?

Ilość lat przepracowanych w charakterze nauczyciela języka angielskiego:

Część 1

1. Oceń czy twoim zdaniem rozwijasz się zawodowo?

   Tak/Nie/Nie wiem

   Skomentuj.....

2. Jakich metod używasz, aby pracować efektywniej? Określ w skali 1-5, gdzie 1- nigdy, 5- bardzo często, jak często używasz każdej z nich

Formy rozwoju zawodowego	**1-5**
Uczestniczę w konferencjach, warsztatach	
Czytam literaturę fachową	
Rozmawiam z innymi nauczycielami	
Obserwuję jak inni prowadzą lekcje	
Monitoruję przebieg własnych lekcji	
Pytam uczniów o ich ocenę moich lekcji	
Rozdaję uczniom kwestionariusze do oceny mojej pracy	
Przeprowadzam własne badania, np. sprawdzające skuteczność jakieś metody nauczania	

3. Określ w skali 1-3 w jakim stopniu praca nauczyciela jest dla ciebie stresująca, jeśli w ogóle (1- nie jest stresująca, 2 – jest średnio stresująca, 3 – jest bardzo stresująca)

   1 - 2 - 3

4. Określ w skali 1-5 które sytuacje uważasz za najbardziej stresujące dla ciebie jako nauczyciela (1- w ogóle nie jest to dla mnie stresujące, 5- jest to dla mnie bardzo stresujące)

Stresory	**1-5**
'Trudni' uczniowie	
Utrzymanie dyscypliny w klasie	
Przynoszenie pracy szkolnej do domu	
Presja czasowa: dużo materiału-mało czasu	
Nielimitowany czas pracy	

Emocjonalne traktowanie porażek i sukcesów uczniów	
Narażenie na ciągłą krytykę ze strony uczniów, rodziców, dyrekcji, inspektorów	
Dyrekcja nie liczy się z opinią nauczyciela przy podejmowaniu decyzji	
Starania o zbudowanie/utrzymanie autorytetu wśród uczniów	
Ciągłe wymagania ze strony uczniów, rodziców, dyrekcji	
Oczekiwanie, by być zawsze na bieżąco z nowymi programami	
Konieczność ciągłego dokształcania	
Inne	

5. Jakie są twoje mocne strony w nauczaniu ……..
6. Jakie są twoje słabe strony w nauczaniu……...……..
7. Jak oceniasz rezultaty swojej pracy nauczycielskiej w porównaniu z wysiłkiem, jaki wkładasz w proces nauczania? (podkreśl właściwe)

bardzo dobre / dobre / przeciętne / słabe

Skomentuj.....

8. Czy twoje zaangażowanie w pracę nauczyciela zmienia się z upływem czasu? (podkreśl właściwe)

wzrasta / nie zmienia się / maleje

Skomentuj.....

Część 2

1. Które z poniższych cech najlepiej cię charakteryzują (możesz dopisać własne cechy)?

Określ w skali 1-5 gdzie: 1- ta cecha charakteryzuje mnie w niewielkim stopniu, 5- ta cecha charakteryzuje mnie w dużym stopniu

Cecha	**1-5**
1. Dynamiczny	
2. Cierpliwy	
3. Pogodny, wesoły	
4. Sprawiedliwy	
5. Konsekwentny (jeśli coś postanowi, to nie ma od tego odwołania)	
6. Zaangażowany, entuzjastyczny	
7. Wyrozumiały	
8 Wymagający	
9. Inne	

2. Co sądzisz o swojej pracy? Czy lubisz to co robisz? Tak/Nie/ Nie jestem pewien (-na)
   Skomentuj:……
3. Czy możesz o sobie powiedzieć, że jesteś stworzony(a) do wykonywania tego zawodu
   Tak?Nie?Nie jestem pewien (-na)
   Dlaczego? Dlaczego nie?.....
4. Wymień trzy cechy swojego charakteru, które utrudniają ci pracę nauczyciela (jeśli takie istnieją!)
   ……
5. Co, wg ciebie, oznacza wyrażenie: „*Nauczyciel (-ka) X jest autorytetem dla uczniów*”?
   Skomentuj:…….
6. Czy sądzisz, że jesteś autorytetem dla uczniów?
   Tak/Nie/Nie wiem
   Skomentuj:.....
   Jeśli tak, to w jaki sposób budujesz/budowałeś(-aś) swój autorytet?
   -
   -
   -
   -
7. Czy zdarza się, że jesteś stronniczy w stosunku do niektórych uczniów?
   Tak/Nie/Nie jestem pewien (-na)
   Skomentuj.....
8. Czy sądzisz, że uczniowie bywają zestresowani podczas twoich lekcji?
   Tak/Nie/Nie jestem pewien(-na)
   Skomentuj.....
   W jakich sytuacjach lekcyjnych poziom stresu wśród uczniów jest najwyższy a w jakich najniższy? Jak studenci reagują na te sytuacje stresowe? Uzupełnij tabelę

Poziom stresu	**W jakich sytuacjach**	**Jak reagują na to uczniowie**
Wysoki poziom		
Niski poziom		

9. Określ, w jakim stopniu charakteryzuje cię jako nauczyciela języka obcego każdy z wymienionych stylów (obok każdego podaj właściwą cyfrę od 1 do 5, gdzie 1- ten styl jest mi zupełnie obcy, 5- to właśnie mój styl nauczania)

Style	**1-5**	**Komentarz**
Autokratyczny (nauczyciel-władca sam kieruje lekcją i podejmuje wszystkie decyzje)		
Paternalistyczny (nauczyciel traktuje uczniów jak swoje dzieci – ciepło i z troską)		
Konsultacyjny (nauczyciel konsultuje z		

uczniami kwestie dotyczące lekcji, ale decyzje podejmuje sam)		
Demokratyczny (nauczyciel daje uczniom swobodę podejmowania decyzji, ale w pewnych granicach i godzi się na decyzje uczniów)		
Laissez-faire (nauczyciel daje uczniom całkowitą swobodę w klasie – każdy robi to, co chce)		

10. W które z poniższych ról wcielasz się w klasie i jak często? Oceń wg skali 1-5 gdzie: 1-nigdy, 5-bardzo często

Rola	**1-5**
Dzielący się wiedzą	
Udzielający pomocy	
Motywator dodający zapału do pracy	
Organizator pracy wydający polecenia i instrukcje	
Kontroler nadzorujący pracę uczniów	
Oceniający postępy ucznia	
Uważny słuchacz gotowy do pomocy uczniom w ich problemach	
Negocjator chętny do podejmowania decyzji klasowych razem z uczniami	
Analizujący i odpowiadający na potrzeby uczniów	
Inne…..	

11. Jakich sposobów używasz najczęściej aby: 1. zmotywować uczniów do pracy, 2. wyrazić uznanie dla ich wysiłków? Wypisz w punktach zaczynając od najczęściej używanych oraz określ w jakich sytuacjach używasz poszczególnych strategii

Sposoby motywowania uczniów do nauki	**W jakich sytuacjach lekcyjnych**
- - -	
Sposoby wyrażania uznania dla wysiłków uczniów	**W jakich sytuacjach lekcyjnych**

12. W jaki sposób wyrażasz swoją dezaprobatę, gdy:

Uczeń:	Twoja reakcja	Jak często (1-5)
jest nieprzygotowany do lekcji		
nie ma zadania domowego		
nie zaliczył testu		

13. Których z niżej wymienionych strategii używasz, aby utrzymać dyscyplinę w klasie? Oceń częstotliwość ich stosowania w skali 1-5, gdzie 1-nigdy, 2- rzadko, 3-czasami, 4- często, 5-bardzo często oraz określ, w jakich sytuacjach ich używasz. Możesz dopisać własne strategie

Strategia	Częstotliwość	W jakiej sytuacji?
Podnosisz głos		
Robisz karny test dla klasy		
Posyłasz do dyrektora		
Upominasz		
Przerywasz lekcję		
Wzywasz do odpowiedzi		
Rozmawiasz z uczniem (-ami) po lekcji		
Wpisujesz uwagę do dziennika		
Inne……..		

14. W jakim stopniu wymienione poniżej czynniki wpływają na ocenę, jaką wystawiasz uczniowi? Określ w skali 1-5, gdzie 1-ten czynnik nie ma dużego znaczenia, 5- czynnik ten jest bardzo ważny w ocenianiu

Czynniki wpływające na ocenę	1-5
Zasób wiedzy ucznia	
Umiejętność skierowania uwagi nauczyciela na te partie materiału, z których uczeń jest przygotowany lepiej	
Nastawienie nauczyciela do ucznia	
Poprzednie stopnie ucznia z przedmiotu	
Wygląd zewnętrzny ucznia	
Inne	

15. Czy twoim zdaniem zawsze obiektywnie oceniasz pracę uczniów?

Tak / Nie/ Nie jestem pewien (-na)

Skomentuj:……

16. Oceń swoje umiejętności w skali 1-5, gdzie: 5 -bardzo dobrze, 1- bardzo słabo. Uzasadnij swój wybór oceny

Nauczyciel potrafi.....	**1-5**	**Komentarz**
Mówić płynnie w języku obcym		
Jasno i klarownie tłumaczyć gramatykę		
Mówić o kulturze danego kraju w sposób interesujący		

17. Czy jesteś osobą gestykulującą? Określ to w skali 1-5, gdzie: 1- prawie nie używasz gestów, 5- gestykulujsz bardzo dużo 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
18. W jakich sytuacjach i jak często używasz podczas lekcji różnych gestów i min? Czemu one służą (dlaczego ich używasz)? Jak często? (1-nigdy, 5- bardzo często)

	Jakie?	**Jak często? (1-5)**	**W jakiej sytuacji**	**Czemu służy**
Gesty (np. grożenie palcem)				
Miny (np. uśmiech)				

19. Jak często podczas lekcji zmieniasz swoją pozycję w klasie? Uzupełnij tabelę

Podczas lekcji…	**Częstotliwość (1-5)**	**Na jakim etapie lekcji**	**Dlaczego?**
Siedzisz za biurkiem			
Stoisz przy tablicy			
Chodzisz po klasie			
Inne ……..			

20. Czy sądzisz, że utrzymanie kontaktu wzrokowego podczas rozmowy z uczniem jest sprawą istotną?

Tak/Nie/Nie mam zdania

Jeśli tak, to jaką według ciebie taki rodzaj kontaktu pełni rolę?

Skomentuj:……..

Jak często ty podczas lekcji starasz się podtrzymywać kontakt wzrokowy z uczniem/grupą? (podkreśl właściwe)

bardzo często- często - czasami- rzadko- nigdy

21. Czy zdarza ci się przynosić do klasy swoje: (podkreśl właściwą odpowiedź)

    1. pozytywne nastroje? Tak/Nie/Nie jestem pewien (-na)

        a. negatywne nastroje? Tak/Nie/Nie jestem pewien(-na)

    Skomentuj.....

    Określ w skali 1-5 częstotliwość tego zjawiska, gdzie: 1- nigdy, 5 - bardzo często. Określ w jaki sposób twój nastrój wpływa na atmosferę lekcji

Nastroje	**Jak często (1-5)**	**Wpływ na atmosferę lekcji**
Pozytywne		
Negatywne		

22. Czy sądzisz, że wygląd zewnętrzny nauczyciela wpływa na jakość kontaktów z uczniami?

    Tak/Nie/Nie jestem pewien (-na)

    Skomentuj.....

23. Czy zachowanie twojej klasy lub któregoś z uczniów wyprowadziło cię kiedyś z równowagi?

    Tak/Nie

    Jeśli tak, opisz tę sytuację oraz swoje werbalne i niewerbalne reakcje

    ……

    ……

Appendix 2 Questionnaire for a student

(Translation of the Polish version of the questionnaire)

Age:
Sex:
Number of English lessons a week:
Language level:
Name of the teacher:

Part 1

1. Do you think that knowledge of English will prove useful in your future? (underline the appropriate answer)

   definitely yes / rather yes / rather no / no

   Why? Why not?……..

2. How do the following factors influence your learning English? Determine the factors on the scale of 1-3, where: 3- it is a very important factor, 2- it is a factor of moderate importance, 1- it is not important in my learning English

Factors influencing your learning English	**1-3**
You are afraid of a bad mark	
You are afraid of malicious comments from the teacher	
You are afraid of malicious comments from your classmates	
You are afraid you will not get a promotion	
Your parents expect good marks from you	
You will choose this language in the Matura exam	
You compete with your classmates to be the best in the class	
You are going to study TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)	
You are convinced the knowledge of English will prove useful in your future job	
You have got your own personal interests	
Other …..	

3. Do you think it is possible to develop language skills to a high level of proficiency at school?

   Yes / No /I am not sure

Comment.....

4. Do you take part in extra English classes, e.g. language courses, private tutorials?

   Yes/No

Why?Why not?.....

5. Is English easy or difficult for you to learn? Determine it on the scale of 1-3 where 1- it is easy, 3- it is difficult to learn

   1 - 2 - 3

6. Determine on the scale of 1-3 how difficult are the following aspects of learning English for you: 1- it is easy for you, 2- it is relatively difficult for you, 3- it is difficult for you

Aspects of learning English	**1-3**
Learning grammar	
Learning vocabulary	
Understanding the written text	
Correct pronunciation	
Understanding texts recorded on the cassettes, CD's	
Understanding what the teacher says	
Preparing written works	
Fluent speaking	

7. Finish the sentence: You could have better marks in English if only you.....
8. What language activities do you like doing best while working in the following class groupings? (Fill in the table)

Forms of work	**In what situations (types of language activities)**
Work individually	
Work in groups	
Work in pairs	
Work together with the whole class	

9. Which of the following types of activities do you like doing during the lesson of English? Determine how much you like doing the particular activities on the scale of 1-5, where: 1- You do not like it, 5- You like it very much

Type of activity	**1-5**
Doing grammatical exercises	
Doing lexical exercises	
Listening to cassettes and CDs	
Watching video	
Participating in language games	
Preparing projects devoted to a given topic	
Other ……..	

Part 2

1. Which of the following features of personality describe your English teacher best (you can add more features to the list)? Determine on the scale of 1-5 to what degree, in your opinion, the feature is

characteristic of your English teacher: 1- the feature is not characteristic of my teacher, 5- the feature is very characteristic of him/her.

Feature	1-5
1. dynamic	
2. patient	
3. cheerful	
4. just	
5. consistent	
6. enthusiastic	
7. understanding	
8. demanding	
9. other features.....	

2. Do you think your teacher likes his/her job and is eager to teach?
   Yes/No/I am not sure

Comment……

3. Do you think your English teacher is 'a born teacher'? Yes/ No / I am not sure
   Why?/Why not? ……

4. How do you understand the sentence: *'Teacher X or Y is an authority for his/her students'*?
   Comment.....
5. Do you think your teacher tries to be an authority for his/her students?
   Yes / No / I don't know
   Commen:.....
6. What measures, in your opinion, does your teacher take to build his/her authority? Enumerate some of them and assess by underlining the correct option whether they are effective or not
   - effective/ not effective
   - effective/ not effective
   - effective/ not effective
7. Do you perceive your English teacher to be an authority for you?
   Yes / No / I don't know
   Comment:……
8. Does your teacher treat students partially? Yes/ No / I am not sure
   How do you recognize that your English teacher likes some of your peers more than the others? .....…….
9. In what classroom situations is the level of stress during a lesson of English the highest and when is it the lowest? How do you react to the stressful situations?

Level of stress	In what situations	Your reactions
High level	- -	- -
Low level	- -	- -

10. How often and in what situations does your teacher use the following strategies to keep discipline in the classroom? Determine the frequency of use of each of the strategies on the scale of 1-5, where: 1-never, 5-very often, and give suggestions of your possible reactions in the same situation

Strategy	Frequency	In what situation	How would you behave in your teacher's place
Shouting			
'Penalty test' for the class			
Sending to the principal			
Interrupting the lesson			
Asking for students' attention			
Checking the level of student's knowledge orally			
Talking with a student after the class			
Writing a note in the class register			
Other			

11. Would you be able to indicate which one of the teaching styles enumerated below is most typical of your teacher? If yes, mark it with 'x' and determine whether you like the style or not.

Styles	Style of my teacher	Your opinion: Y- you like it, N- you do not like it
Authoritarian (a teacher-ruler manages the lesson and makes all classroom decisions by him/ herself)		
Paternal (a teacher treats students like his/her own children – with care and affection)		
Consultative (a teacher consults with students different questions concerning classroom conduct but makes all decisions by him/ herself)		
Democratic (a teacher gives students freedom to make classroom decisions within framework set by him/her and accepts their choices)		
Laissez-faire (a teacher gives students total freedom to do whatever they want in the		

classroom)		

12. How often does your teacher play the following roles in the classroom? Determine it on the scale of 1-5, where 1- never, 5-very often

Role	1-5
Knowledge giver	
Helper	
Motivator Negotiator	
Manager	
Controller	
Assessor	
Attentive listener	
Negotiator	
Needs analyst	
Other…..	

13. To what degree, do you think, the following factors influence the mark you get in English? Determine it on the scale of 1-5, where: 5- it is a very important factor, 1- this factor does not influence the mark

Factors influencing the mark	1-5
What you know	
The ability to direct teacher's attention to the part of the language material you know more about	
Teacher's attitude to you	
Your former grades	
Your appearance	
Other	

14. Assess the skills of your teacher on the scale of 1-5, where 1- very poor, 5- very well

The teacher …	1-5
Speaks English fluently	
Explains grammar clearly	
Speaks about the culture of English speaking countries in an interesting way	

15. Does your English teacher always assess your work objectively?

Yes/ No / I am not sure

Why?Why not?.....

16. Which strategies does your English teacher use to: a) motivate students to learn, b) to express his/her approval? Determine the frequency on the scale of 1-5, where 1- never, 5- very often and assess the effectiveness of each strategy

Strategy	**Frequency (1-5)**	**In what situation**	**Effectiveness (effective/not effective)**
Oral praise			
Short expression of approval, e.g. Superb, Excellent, O.K.			
A good mark for active participation in a lesson			
Smiling			
Patting student's shoulder			
Bringing additional materials			
Organising and managing language competition, games, quizzes			
Other……..			

17. How does your English teacher express his/her discontent in the classroom situations enlisted below. Fill in the table below: describe your teacher's reaction in each situation and assess its effectiveness. How would you behave in the teacher's place?

Student…	**The teacher's reaction**	**Assessment of teacher's reaction** (effective/ partly effective/ not effective)	**Your reaction in teacher's place**
is not prepared for the lesson			
has no homework			
did not pass a test			

18. What would you advice your English teacher to do to make his/her lessons more interesting and motivating to you?

.....

.....……..

19. To what degree does the way of conducting lesson by your English teacher (his/her non-verbal behaviour, e.g. walking around the classroom, keeping eye contact with students, etc.) influence your interest in the lesson?

a) a lot
b) moderately
c) a little
d) has no influence

Comment:.....

20. What characteristic gestures and facial expressions does your teacher use during a lesson? How often does s/he use them and what is their influence on you

	Example	**How often (1-5)**	**In what situation**	**How does it influence you**
Gestures				
Facial expressions				

21. In what way does your teacher signal that a student's oral production is correct/incorrect (gesture, facial expression, other)? Write down the ways s/he uses and determine the frequency of their use by your teacher and the influence that their use in the classroom has on you

In the case a student's oral production is:	**The teacher's behaviour**	**How often (1-5)**	**Influence on you**
Correct			
Incorrect			

22. Is the fact that your teacher keeps eye contact when talking with you important to you?

Yes/No/I don't mind

Comment:……..

Does your teacher keep eye-contact with you? Yes/No

How often? (underline the appropriate answer)

Very often – often – sometimes – rarely – never

23. In what way do the following forms of the teacher's behaviour influence your behaviour and mood in a lesson? Determine on the scale of 1-5 how often your teacher behaves in this way during a lesson: 1-never, 5-very often

The teacher's behaviour	**Frequency (1-5)**	**Influence on you**
Sits at the desk		
Stands at the blackboard		
Walks around the classroom		
Other……		

24. Is there anything in your teacher's appearance (e.g. clothes, jewellery, hairstyle, etc.) that significantly (positively or negatively) influences your level of concentration in a lesson?

Yes/No/ I am not sure

If yes, what is it and how does it influence you?

.....……...

25. Do you sometimes have the impression that your teacher brings his/her positive and negative moods into the classroom? If yes, how often? How do the moods influence you personally and the atmosphere in a lesson?

The teacher's mood	**How often (1-5),**	**Influence on you**	**Influence on the atmosphere in the lesson**
Positive			
Negative			

26. Has it ever happened that the behaviour of your class or any of your classmates made your teacher extremely angry?

Yes/No / I don't remember

If yes, describe the situation and your teacher's verbal and non-verbal reactions to it

…….. ……..….

How would you assess your teacher's behaviour in that situation?.....….....

……

.

Kwestionariusz dla ucznia

(wersja orginalna)

Wiek:

Płeć:

Klasa:

Ilość godz. języka obcego w tyg.:

Poziom zaawansowania:

Nazwisko nauczyciela języka angielskiego:

Część 1

1. Czy sądzisz, że znajomość języka angielskiego przyda ci się w przyszłości? (zaznacz odpowiednio):

   zdecydowanie tak/ raczej tak / raczej nie / nie

   Dlaczego? Dlaczego nie?.....

2. W jaki sposób poniższe czynniki wpływają na przebieg Twojej nauki języka obcego? Określ w skali 1-3, gdzie: 3- jest to bardzo ważny powód, 2- jest to średnio ważny powód, 1- nie jest to dla mnie ważne w nauce języka obcego

Czynniki wpływające na przebieg nauki	1-3
Obawiasz się oceny niedostatecznej	
Obawiasz się złośliwych uwag nauczyciela	
Obawiasz się złośliwości ze strony kolegów	
Boisz się, że nie przejdziesz do następnej klasy	
Rodzice wymagają od ciebie dobrych ocen	
Ten język wybierzesz na maturze	
Współzawodniczysz o dobre oceny z kolegami w klasie	
Zamierzasz studiować filologię angielską	
Sądzisz, że znajomość języka obcego przyda ci się w przyszłej pracy	
Masz osobiste zainteresowania (muzyka, kultura, itp.)	
Inne …..	

3. Czy sądzisz, że szkoła może dobrze nauczyć cię posługiwania się językiem obcym?

   Tak/Nie/Nie jestem pewien (-na)

   Skomentuj.....

4. Czy bierzesz udział w dodatkowych zajęciach z języka obcego, np. kursach językowych, korepetycjach

   Tak/Nie

   Dlaczego? Dlaczego nie?.....

5. Czy język angielski jest dla ciebie łatwy czy trudny do nauki? Określ stopień trudności w skali 1-3, gdzie: 1-ten język jest łatwy, 3- ten język jest trudny do nauki

1-2-3

6. Oceń skalę trudności każdego z poniższych aspektów uczenia się języka w skali 1-3, gdzie: 1- jest to dla ciebie łatwe, 2- jest to dla ciebie średnio trudne, 3- jest to dla ciebie trudne

Aspekty uczenia się języka obcego	**1-3**
Nauka gramatyki	
Nauka słownictwa	
Rozumienie czytanego tekstu	
Poprawna wymowa	
Rozumienie tekstów nagranych na kasetach, płytach CD	
Rozumienie tego, co mówi nauczyciel	
Pisanie prac pisemnych, np. wypracowań	
Swobodne mówienie	

7. Dokończ zdanie: Mógłbyś/mogłabyś mieć lepsze oceny z języka obcego, gdybyś…….....

8. Nad jakimi zadaniami językowymi na lekcji języka angielskiego lubisz pracować najbardziej wykorzystując do ich wykonania wymienione poniżej formy pracy(uzupełnij tabelę)?

Formy pracy na lekcji	**W jakich sytuacjach (rodzaje zadań językowych)**
Praca indywidualna	
Praca w grupach	
Praca w parach	
Praca wspólnie (wraz z całą klasą)	

9. Które z niżej wymienionych zadań językowych lubisz wykonywać na lekcji języka angielskiego najbardziej a które najmniej? Określ w jakim stopniu lubisz poszczególne zadania w skali 1-5, gdzie: 1- nie lubię, 5- bardzo lubię

Rodzaj zadania językowego	**1-5**
Wykonywanie ćwiczeń gramatycznych	
Wykonywanie ćwiczeń leksykalnych	
Słuchanie kaset i płyt	
Oglądanie video	

Uczestnictwo w grach językowych	
Przygotowywanie projektów na określony temat	
Inne……..	

Część 2

1. Które z poniższych cech charakteryzują twojego nauczyciela najbardziej? (możesz dopisać inne cechy wyróżniające twojego nauczyciela)? Określ w skali 1-5 w jakim stopniu, twoim zdaniem, dana cecha jest charakterystyczna dla twojego nauczyciela języka, gdzie: 1-posiada tę cechę w niewielkim stopniu, 5-posiada tę cechę w znacznym stopniu

Cecha	**1-5**
1. Dynamiczny	
2. Cierpliwy	
3. Pogodny, wesoły	
4. Sprawiedliwy	
5. Konsekwentny (jeśli coś postanowi, to nie ma od tego odwołania)	
6. Zaangażowany, entuzjastyczny	
7. Wyrozumiały	
8. Surowy	
9. Inne	

2. Czy sądzisz, że twój nauczyciel lubi swoją pracę i zależy mu na skutecznym nauczaniu Tak/Nie/ Nie jestem pewien (-na)
   Skomentuj:……..
3. Czy sądzisz, że twój nauczyciel jest stworzony do wykonywania tego zawodu?
   Tak/Nie/Nie jestem pewien (-na)
   Dlaczego? Dlaczego nie? .....
4. Co, wg ciebie, oznacza wyrażenie: „*Nauczyciel (-ka) X jest autorytetem dla uczniów*”?
   Skomentuj:…….
5. Czy sądzisz, że twój nauczyciel stara się, aby być autorytetem dla uczniów? Tak/Nie/Nie wiem
   Skomentuj.....

6. Jakich sposobów według ciebie używa nauczyciel, aby zbudować swój autorytet? Wymień kilka i oceń je podkreślając odpowiednią literę: s-skuteczna, n-skuteczna

……s/n.....s/n.....s/n.....s/n

7. Czy twój nauczyciel języka jest autorytetem dla ciebie?

Tak/Nie/Nie wiem

Skomentuj.....

8. Czy nauczyciel traktuje niektórych uczniów stronniczo?

Nie/Tak/Nie jestem pewien (-na)

Po czym poznajesz, że nauczyciel lubi pewnych uczniów bardziej niż innych?

……...

9. W jakich sytuacjach lekcyjnych poziom stresu wśród uczniów jest najwyższy a w jakich najniższy? Jak reagujesz na sytuacje stresowe w klasie? Uzupełnij tablelę

Poziom stresu	**W jakich sytuacjach?**	**Twoja reakcja**
Wysoki poziom	- -	- -
Niski poziom	- -	- -

10. Jak często i w jakich sytuacjach nauczyciel używa poniższych strategii, aby utrzymać dyscyplinę w klasie? Oceń skuteczność stosowania tych strategii, częstotliwość ich użycia w skali 1-5, gdzie 1-nigdy, 2- rzadko, 3-czasami, 4- często, 5-bardzo często oraz podaj własne propozycje reakcji w danej sytuacji.

Strategia	**Częstotliwość**	**W jakiej sytuacji**	**Twoja reakcja na miejscu nauczyciela**
Krzyk			
Karny test dla klasy			
Skierowanie na rozmowę do dyrektora			
Upomnienie			
Wezwanie do odpowiedzi			
Przerwanie lekcji			
Rozmowa z uczniem(-ami) po lekcji			
Wpisanie uwagi do dziennika			
Inne			

11. Czy potrafiłbyś dopasować styl dominujący u twojego nauczyciela do któregoś z poniższych modeli? Zaznacz go (x). Określ, czy ten styl ci odpowiada czy nie.

Style	Styl dominujący u nauczyciela	Twoja opinia: T – odpowiada mi, N – nie odpowiada mi
Autokratyczny (nauczyciel-władca sam kieruje lekcją i podejmuje wszystkie decyzje)		
Paternalistyczny (nauczyciel traktuje uczniów jak swoje dzieci – ciepło i z troską)		
Konsultacyjny (nauczyciel konsultuje z uczniami kwestie dotyczące lekcji ale decyzje podejmuje sam)		
Demokratyczny (nauczyciel daje uczniom swobodę podejmowania decyzji, ale w pewnych granicach i godzi się na decyzje uczniów)		
Laissez-faire (nauczyciel daje uczniom całkowitą swobodę w klasie – każdy robi jak chce)		

12. Jak często twój nauczyciel języka angielskiego wciela się w poniższe role? Oceń w skali 1-5 gdzie: 1- nigdy, 5- bardzo często

Rola	1-5
Dzielący się wiedzą	
Udzielający pomocy	
Motywator dodający zapału do pracy	
Organizator pracy wydający polecenia i instrukcje	
Kontroler nadzorujący pracę uczniów	
Oceniający postępy ucznia	
Uważny słuchacz gotowy do pomocy uczniom w ich problemach	
Negocjator chętny do podejmowania decyzji klasowych razem z uczniami	
Analizujący i odpowiadający na potrzeby uczniów	
Inne…..	

13. Do jakiego stopnia, twoim zdaniem, wymienione poniżej czynniki wpływają na ocenę, jaką otrzymujesz u nauczyciela języka angielskiego? Określ w skali 1-5, gdzie: 5 - jest to bardzo ważny czynnik, 1 - ten czynnik nie wpływa na ocenę

Czynniki wpływające na ocenę	1-5
Twój zasób wiedzy	
Umiejętność skierowania uwagi nauczyciela na te partie materiału, z których jesteś najlepiej przygotowany	
Nastawienie nauczyciela do ciebie	
Twoje poprzednie stopnie	
Twój wygląd zewnętrzny	
Inne.....	

14. Oceń umiejętności nauczyciela w skali 1-5, gdzie: 5 - bardzo dobrze, 1- bardzo słabo

Nauczyciel potrafi.....	1-5
Mówić płynnie w języku obcym	
Tłumaczyć gramatykę jasno i	
Mówić o kulturze krajów anglojęzycznych w interesujący sposób	

15. Czy sądzisz, że twój nauczyciel języka angielskiego zawsze ocenia twoją pracę obiektywnie

Tak/Nie/ Nie jestem pewien(-na)

Skomentuj:.....

16. Jakich strategii używa twój nauczyciel aby: a) zmotywować uczniów do pracy,

b) docenić ich wysiłek? Wskaż częstotliwość ich użycia w skali od 1-5, gdzie: 1- nigdy, 5- bardzo często oraz oceń, czy według ciebie sposoby te są skuteczne

Strategia	Częstotliwość (1-5)	W jakiej sytuacji	Skuteczność (skuteczna/nieskuteczna)
Ustna pochwała, np. 'Ten test najlepiej napisał X'			
Słowa uznania, np. super, świetnie,			
Ocena za aktywność			
Uśmiech			
Poklepanie po ramieniu			
Nauczyciel przynosi dodatkowe materiały			
Nauczyciel organizuje gry, konkursy, quizy			
Inne			

17. W jaki sposób nauczyciel wyraża swoje niezadowolenie w niżej wymienionych sytuacjach? Uzupełnij tabelę. Opisz reakcje nauczyciela oraz oceń skuteczność jego zachowania. Jak ty byś się zachował na miejscu nauczyciela?

Uczeń....	**Reakcja nauczyciela**	**Ocena skuteczności (skuteczne/częściowo skuteczne/nieskuteczne)**	**Twoja reakcja na miejscu nauczyciela**
nie jest przygotowany do lekcji			
nie ma zadania domowego			
nie zaliczył testu			

18. Co doradziłbyś (doradziłabyś) swojemu nauczycielowi, aby jego/jej lekcje były ciekawsze i bardziej motywowały cię do pracy na lekcji?

    .....

    .....

19. W jakim stopniu sposób prowadzenia lekcji przez nauczyciela (jego/jej niewerbalne zachowania, np. chodzenie po klasie, podtrzymywanie kontaktu wzrokowego z uczniami, itp.) wpływa na twoje zainteresowanie lekcją?

    a) dużym c) małym

    b) średnim d) nie ma wpływu

    Skomentuj.....

20. Jakie charakterystyczne gesty i miny stosuje twój nauczyciel na lekcji? Określ jak często je stosuje i jak ich użycie wpływa na ciebie?

	Przykład	**Jak często (1-5)**	**W jakiej sytuacji**	**Jak to na ciebie wpływa**
Gesty (np. grożenie palcem)				
Miny (np. uśmiech)				

21. W jaki sposób nauczyciel sygnalizuje, że ustna odpowiedź ucznia jest poprawna lub błędna? (gest, mina, inne)? Wypisz te sposoby oraz określ częstotliwość ich stosowania i wpływ jaki ich użycie w klasie ma na ciebie

W przypadku gdy wypowiedź ustna ucznia jest::	Zachowanie nauczyciela	Jak często	Jak to na ciebie wpływa
Poprawna			
Niepoprawna			

22. Czy ważne jest dla ciebie, aby nauczyciel rozmawiając z tobą utrzymywał kontakt wzrokowy?

Tak /Nie / Nie mam nic przeciwko temu

Skomentuj: .....

Czy nauczyciel podtrzymuje go? Nie / Tak

Jak często? (podkreśl właściwe) bardzo często- często - czasami- rzadko- nigdy

23. W jaki sposób następujące zachowania nauczyciela wpływają na twoje zachowanie i samopoczucie na lekcji? Określ w skali 1-5 częstotliwość tych zachowań, gdzie: 1-nigdy, 5- bardzo często

Zachowanie nauczyciela	Częstotliwość (1-5)	Jak to na ciebie wpływa?
Siedzi za biurkiem		
Stoi przy tablicy		
Chodzi po klasie		
Inne.....		

24. Czy w wyglądzie twojego nauczyciela jest coś (np. strój, biżuteria, fryzura, etc.), co szczególnie pozytywnie lub negatywnie wpływa na twój poziom koncentracji w czasie lekcji?

Tak / Nie /Nie jestem pewien(-na)

Jeśli tak, co to jest i jak na ciebie wpływa?.....

25. Czy masz czasem wrażenie, że twój nauczyciel przynosi do klasy swoje pozytywne i negatywne nastroje? Jeśli tak, to jak często? Jak te nastroje wpływają na ciebie a jak na atmosferę na lekcji?

Nastroje nauczyciela	Jak często (1-5)	Wpływ na ciebie	Wpływ na atmosferę panującą na zajęciach
Pozytywne			
Negatywne			

26. Czy zachowanie twojej klasy lub któregoś z uczniów wyprowadziło kiedyś twojego nauczyciela z równowagi?

Tak / Nie / Nie pamiętam

Jeśli tak, opisz tę sytuację i napisz jak nauczyciel się wówczas zachowywał. Jak oceniasz zachowanie nauczyciela w tej sytuacji? .....

Appendix 3 Observation form

Name and surname of the teacher:

Date:

Class observed:

Personality

1. Which of the following features of personality describes the teacher best?

feature	1-5
1. dynamic	
2. patient	
3. cheerful	
4. motivating	
5. just	
6. consistent	
7. enthusiastic	
8. understanding	
9. demanding	
10. other features.....	

2. What measures does the teacher take to build his/her authority among students?
   -
   -
   -
   -
   -
3. Do you think the teacher likes his/her job and is eager to teach effectively?

   Yes/No/Not sure

   Comment.....
4. Does the teacher treat some student(s) partially? Yes/No

   Comment……..
5. In what classroom situation was the level of stress the highest and the lowest? How did the students react to these stressful situations?

Level of stress	In what situations	Student's reactions
High level		
Low level		

Discipline

6. How often and in what situations did the teacher use the following strategies to keep discipline in the classroom?

Strategy	Frequency	In what situation?
Shouting		
Penalty test for the class		
Sending to the principal		
Interrupting the lesson		
Asking for students' attention		
Checking the level of student's knowledge orally		
Talking with a student after classes		
Writing a note in the class register		
Other		

Teaching style and roles played in the classroom

7. The style characteristic of the teacher seemed to be:

Styles	1-5
Authoritarian (a teacher-ruler manages the lesson and makes all classroom decisions by him/ herself)	
Paternal (a teacher treats students like his/her own children – with care and affection)	
Consultative (a teacher consults with students different questions concerning classroom conduct but makes all decisions by him/ herself)	
Democratic (a teacher gives students freedom to make classroom decisions within framework set by him/her	

and accepts their choices)	
Laissez-faire (a teacher gives students total freedom to do whatever they want in the classroom)	

8. How often did the teacher play the following roles during the lesson:

Role	1-5
Assessor	
Knowledge giver	
Manager	
Negotiator	
Attentive listener	
Controller	
Motivator	
Facilitator	
Need-analyst	
Inne…..	

Evaluation

9. The skills of the teacher could be assessed as follows:

The teacher could…	**1-5** (1- very poorly, 5- very well)
Speak English fluently	
Explain grammar clearly	
Speak about the culture of English speaking countries in an interesting way	

Motivating and encouraging to work

10. How often during the lesson did the teacher use the following strategies to motivate students to work and appreciate their efforts

Strategy	**Frequency (1-5)**
Oral praise	
A short expression of approval, e.g. Superb, Excellent, O.K.	

A good mark for active participation in a lesson	
A smile	
Patting student's shoulder	
Bringing extra materials	
Organising language competition, quizzes, language games, etc.	
Other……..	

11. How did the teacher express his/her discontent in the following situations:

A student:	**The teacher's reaction**
was not prepared for the lesson	
had no homework	
failed a test	

<u>Body language</u>

12. What characteristic a) gestures, b) facial expressions did the teacher use during the lesson?

	Example	**How often (1-5)**	**In what situation**
Gestures			
Facial expressions			

13. In what way did the teacher signal that a student's oral production was a) correct, b) incorrect (e.g. a gesture, facial expression, other)?

If a student's oral production was:	**The teacher's behaviour**	**How often**
Correct		
Incorrect		

14. How often did the teacher change his/her body position in the classroom during the lesson (1- never, 5- very often)

The teacher's behaviour	**Frequency (1-5)**
Sat at the desk	
Stood at the blackboard	
Walked around the classroom	

Appendix 4 Interview scheme

(The list of main questions discussed)

The teacher's name:

Date:

Part 1 – The teacher's professional development

- what forms of development s/he uses and how often

Part 2 – Stress at work

- whether the teacher perceives teaching to be stressful or not
- which of the enlisted stress factors the teacher perceives to be the most/the least influencing his/her job

Part 3 – The teacher's self-evaluation

- the teacher's strengths and weaknesses as a professional
- the assessment of the results of the teacher's work in comparion with the effort s/he puts into teaching
- changes in the teacher's engagement in teaching over time

Part 4 – The influence of personality features on the teaching practice

- personality features characterising the teacher best
- features of character which hinder the teacher's work
- the teachers' opinions about vocation to teach

Part 5 – Authority building

- the measures that the teacher takes to build his/her authority in the students' eyes
- 'pet students' and the teachers' ways of treating them in the classroom
- the level of stress in the classroom

Part 6 – Teaching style and roles played in the classroom

- the teachers' ability to define his/her own teaching style
- the frequency of use of different classroom roles

Part 7 – Discipline in the classroom

- the strategies that the teacher uses to prevent and deal with disruptive behaviour

Part 8 – Motivating and encouraging students to learn

- ways of motivating students to learn
- ways of expressing appreciation for students' effort
- ways of expressing discontent with students' language performance

Part 9 – Assessing students

- factors influencing the teacher's choice of a grade when evaluating students' work
- objectivity of the teacher's assessment

Part 10 – Evaluation of the teacher's skills

- the teacher's assessment of his/her teaching skills

Part 11 – The teacher's body-language

- the teacher's degree of awareness of being a 'gesture' person
- characteristic gestures and facial expressions used by the teacher in the classroom
- moving around the classroom
- keeping eye-contact with learners
- bringing positive and negative moods into the classroom
- the teacher's reaction to incidents resulting from the students' misbehaviour.

Appendix 5 Sample diary entries

(1)

7th of October

Parents-helpers?

‘ I walked around the classroom to check if my second grade students did their homework. Mirek did not have it. Again. That was the sixth time in the semester. When I asked him why he did not do the homework his reply was quick and honest as always: ‘I forgot’. Without asking any more questions I gave him ‘E’. I know that another bad mark does not do any difference to him but all he strategies I had applied so far to make him do his homework simply failed. The sudden idea – the last chance. I found his phone number in the school register and wrote it down into my notebook. Maybe his parents will help me? Mirek is a good boy but he is one of the laziest teenagers I know. I believe that his parents will use more effective methods to make him start doing his homework regularly. Time will tell…’

(2)

12th of November

The ‘good’ news

‘ During the long break the headmaster told me that she would come round the following week to see “how I am getting on with the first grade students”. What a nightmare! I went into the classroom in sheer panic. I hate being observed. Will I be able to sound natural? What about my students? Won’t they be too stressed to show the headteacher that our rapport is good? I have one week to think all the details and possible lesson scenarios over. I’ll do my best. As I always try to do.’

(3)

13th of December

Feedback

‘The end of the first semester. I asked my first grade students to share with me their suggestions concerning the ways of ‘improving’ our rapport and the way I taught. I thought that they would start talking but they were not willing to do it. I reformulated my instruction and asked them to write their ideas, suggestions and observations down on slips of paper. I was relieved. It worked. After the lesson Krzyś came to me and explained that they did not answer the question I asked at the beginning of the lesson because they did not know what to

say as for most of them this was the first time that they were asked to expess their opinion about the course and to present some suggestions on how to improve it to meet their needs better.'

(4)

15th of March

Tomek the Lazy Bones

'A person who was unusually happy today was Tomek from the third grade who got C+ in a vocabulary test. Tomek is the type of a person who thinks that learning at home is a waste of time. He is a clever boy but extremely lazy to do anything. When revising the vocabulary at the lesson preceding the test, I told my students to try and associate each of the words with any other word they knew in any language they wanted. Then the students read out their associations aloud. Tomek seemed to be very excited about the idea of association and he actively participated in the activity calling out his crazy and unusual associations so loudly that both I and half of the students at school could hear him as well.

15 minutes ago, when I was giving the tests back, Tomek told me that the association method was "super effective" and he thanked me for showing him what he could do to remember words so quickly during a lesson. I know he has great potential and that he can progress really fast if only he devotes more time to learning. I am glad, however, that I managed to help him learn more quickly and I believe he was not the only person I helped by doing the association activity. I know that generally students are not taught how to learn and this is the knowledge they lack, especially in the secondary school where they have to learn and remember a lot. I must remember to show them tomorrow how they can use the association method in learning other subjects as well. I believe they will like learning more when being equipped with strategies facilitating successful learning.'

(5)

30th of April

I keep my fingers crossed for them

' The last lesson before the Matura exam. I have got only forty-five minutes to give my students the final guidance on how to 'approach' the exam to be the most successful. I remind them of appropriate timing of each part of the exam stressing that they will need it to read their essay a few times to introduce the final corrections. I repeat once again that they need to count the words in the essay so that it is not too long or too short. I stress the basic need to

have a good sleep and to eat nutricious breakfast before the exam. Finally, I give them time to ask me questions. They can do it for the last time. I was with them for three years guiding them, helping them and empathising with them. Now they have to go alone. I wish them all the best.'

(6)

13th of June

A teaching nightmare

' The end of the school year. Giving final marks to the students. This is the most nervous period of the second semester. Although all the students seem to be aware that it is the teacher who gives them the final grades at the end of the school year, they usually play the role of 'assessors' themselves and even though they did not learn regularly or even skipped classes, they start comparing their marks with those of their friends trying to convince me that they deserve a better mark than the one that they were given. This behaviour is unacceptable taking into consideration the fact that the criteria for assessment of the students' work that I use are well known to each of them. Some of the first grade students are especially 'cheeky'; Monika, for example. She came to the staffroom today during the long break when I was eating my breakfast and asked if she could write three out of five grammar tests once again as she would like to get 'C' as the final mark because she was not satisfied with a 'D' mark I gave her. I said 'no'. She walked away offended… How to make them 'wake up' and start learning earlier to avoid the situations like this? One thing is sure, in situations like that the teacher needs to keep emotional distance from the students' feelings and emotions (which are very intense and often negative) not to let the students direct the teacher and do what they want.'

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Streszczenie

Celem niniejszej pracy badawczej było określenie w jaki sposób wybrane psycho- oraz socjolingwistyczne czynniki wpływają na dyskurs klasowy rozumiany tutaj jako interakcja między uczniem i nauczycielem podczas lekcji języka obcego. Przeprowadzenie projektu miało również za zadanie wskazanie nauczycielom języków obcych biorących udział w badaniach obszarów zgodności i niezgodności w ocenie ich pracy i zachowania dokonanej przez nich samych, przez uczniów, jak również zewnętrznego obserwatora lekcji (autorkę pracy). Dane zebrane od wybranej grupy nauczycieli pozwoliły na określenie tych obszarów działalności dydaktycznej, w których uczący mają tendencję do przeceniania lub niedoceniania swoich możliwości i umiejętności. Projekt badawczy został zaprojektowany w sposób ułatwiający nauczycielom przeprowadzenie samodzielnej samo-oceny zawodowej, która jak można mieć nadzieję, stanie się przynajmniej dla części nauczycieli uczestniczących w projekcie regularną praktyką.

Pierwszą fazę projektu stanowiło przeprowadzenie wśród nauczycieli języka angielskiego oraz ich uczniów badań kwestionariuszowych, celem których było stwierdzenie, czy - a jeśli tak, to do jakiego stopnia postrzeganie własnej pracy zawodowej w świetle różnych aspektów zachowania nauczyciela w klasie, a wpływających na nauczanie języka znajdowało swoje odbicie w spostrzeżeniach uczniów. Zadaniem obu stron uczestniczących w projekcie badawczym była ocena następujących aspektów pracy i zachowania nauczyciela kształtujących dyskurs w klasie językowej, a w konsekwencji wpływających na postępy ucznia:

- osobowość nauczyciela
- autorytet nauczyciela
- styl nauczania i role przyjmowane w klasie
- używane przez nauczyciela formy motywowania i zachęcania do pracy
- umiejętność utrzymania dyscypliny w klasie
- sposób oceniania pracy i postępów uczniów przez nauczyciela
- niewerbalne aspekty komunikacji w klasie.

W celu otrzymania jak najpełniejszego obrazu sposobu postrzegania wyżej wymienionych czynników wpływających na relacje w klasie językowej poproszono zarówno uczniów, jak i nauczycieli o udzielenie odpowiedzi na dodatkowe pytania stanowiące część pierwszą każdego z kwestionariuszy. Dotyczyły one odpowiednio: stosunku do języka

angielskiego jako przedmiotu szkolnego oraz do nauczania języków obcych w szkole – w kwestionariuszu dla ucznia, a także autorefleksji dotyczącej własnego rozwoju zawodowego, mocnych i słabych stron w nauczaniu oraz stresu zawodowego – w kwestionariuszu dla nauczyciela.

Drugą fazę badań stanowiło przeprowadzenie obserwacji lekcji prowadzonych przez 30 nauczycieli - uczestników projektu pod kątem odpowiedzi udzielonych przez nich samych oraz ich uczniów w części kwestionariuszowej. Zadaniem przeprowadzającego badania było zidentyfikowanie obszarów zgodności oraz rozbieżności pomiędzy opiniami uczniów oraz działaniami nauczyciela oraz samooceną nauczyciela a praktyką pedagogiczną.

Trzecią fazę projektu stanowiło przeprowadzenie wywiadu z 30 nauczycielami, w trakcie trwania którego mogli oni zapoznać się z wynikami badań uzyskanymi w drodze porównania opinii wyrażonych w kwestionariuszach przez samych nauczycieli oraz ich uczniów. Zadaniem nauczycieli było ustosunkowanie się do zidentyfikowanych w toku porównywania rozbieżności pomiędzy opiniami swoimi, swoich uczniów oraz wynikami obserwacji. Ostatnią część projektu stanowiła identyfikacja obszarów rozbieżności w ocenie pracy i zachowania nauczyciela oraz podjęta wraz z nauczycielami próba odnalezienia przyczyn tych rozbieżności.

Równocześnie, dla potrzeb niniejszej pracy oraz własnego rozwoju zawodowego nauczycielka przeprowadzająca badania, a zarazem autorka tej pracy, podjęła się pisania przez okres jednego roku szkolnego pamiętnika nauczyciela, celem którego był systematyczny zapis obserwacji dotyczący zachowania w klasie zarówno jej samej, jak i uczniów, z którymi spotyka się na lekcjach, wzajemnych z nimi relacji oraz przebiegu samego procesu nauczania języka. Pamiętnik ten stanowi podstawę do prześledzenia toku przemyśleń nauczyciela w zakresie auto-monitoringu własnych poczynań w klasie oraz cenne źródło informacji dotyczących samo-oceny nauczycielskich refleksji.

Badania empiryczne przedstawione zostały w czterech rozdziałach. W rozdziale pierwszym obok wskazania cech odróżniających komunikację klasową od naturalnej, co niewątpliwie wpływa na jakość interakcji w klasie językowej, wskazaniu i opisaniu czynników afektywnych kształtujących wzajemne relacje między nauczycielem a uczniami oraz przedstawieniu definicji i wpływu środowiska nauczania na owe relacje, przedstawione zostały również założenia psychologii humanistycznej głoszącej, iż nadrzędnym celem procesu nauczania jest umożliwienie jednostce realizacji własnego potencjału. W tym też rozdziale uwaga czytelnika zostaje skierowana na społeczny wymiar pracy nauczyciela związany z podejmowaniem w klasie, jak i poza nią różnych ról (np. mediatora), za pomocą

których nauczyciel stara się nie tylko przybliżyć uczniom naturę języka obcego, ale również pomóc im zrozumieć i odnaleźć się w świecie, w którym żyją i zdobywają wiedzę. W jakim stopniu nauczyciel potrafi wspomóc szeroko rozumiany rozwój ucznia, zarówno w wymiarze językowym, jak i społecznym zależy od tego, jak efektywnie potrafi ocenić siebie i swoją pracę przez pryzmat ról, w które się wciela. Ostatnią część rozdziału pierwszego stanowi opis sposobów oceny pracy nauczyciela.

W rozdziale drugim przedstawione zostały cele pracy badawczej spośród których najważniejszym było zbadanie, w jaki sposób określone czynniki psycho- i socjolingwistyczne wpływają na jakość interakcji w klasie językowej. Ten rozdział zawiera także opis grupy badawczej oraz uzasadnienie wyboru narzędzi użytych do realizacji projektu. Tu znajduje się również szczegółowy opis poszczególnych etapów przeprowadzanego projektu badawczego, który został opisany wcześniej.

Rozdział trzeci zawiera prezentację oraz interpretację wyników badań. Zebrane na podstawie wywiadów z nauczycielami, badań kwestionariuszowych oraz obserwacji lekcji dane zostały przedstawione w sposób umożliwiający prześledzenie w jaki sposób wybrane czynniki natury psycho- i socjolingwistycznej kształtują relacje w klasie językowej. Ten rozdział zawiera także prezentację oraz interpretację danych zebranych na podstawie pamiętnika nauczyciela stanowiącego swoistą ‘bazę danych’ wskazujących na różnorodność nauczycielskich refleksji.

Ostatni, czwarty rozdział pracy poświęcony jest podsumowaniu wyników oraz przedstawieniu wniosków z przeprowadzonych badań oraz zawiera wskazówki skierowane do nauczycieli języków obcych, celem których jest ukazanie nauczycielom sposobów znajdywania wspólnej płaszczyzny porozumienia z uczniami w celu podniesienia efektywności komunikacji w klasie, co pozwoli na skuteczniejsze nauczanie języka angielskiego.